

OCTOBER

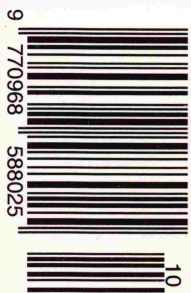
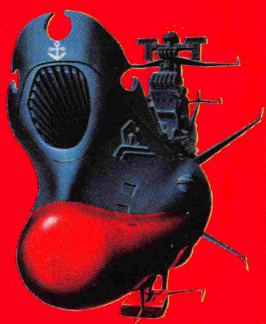
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TEAM AFX

Helen McCarthy, Editor, born under Pisces
Peter Goll, Production, born a piss artist
Steve Kyte, Art Director, born to rule
Jonathan Clements, Translator, born too late
Peter Evans, Away Team AFX, born to be cute
Masaaki Kato, Away Team AFX, born diplomat

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This is the Chinese character 'wan', meaning 'ending'; the Japanese reading is 'kan', and when you see it, it means you've reached the end of an article or instalment!

OTAKU VOCABULARY

You'll find some Japanese terms crop up again and again. Here are a few definitions:

ANIME	Japanese animation
CHARA	Character
KAWAII	Cute
MANGA	Japanese Comics
MECHA	Mechanical object, ie robot, vehicle, weapon, etc.
OTAKU	Anime fanboy/girl
OVA/OAV	Original Video Animation, anime made for video
SEIYUU	Anime voice actor

KONNICHIWA!

This is the third full-colour issue of ANIME FX, and I'd just like to say how very much all of us on Team AFX appreciate your letters and phonecalls telling us what you think of our new style. For Steve and Peter it's been a vertical learning curve to adapt from Mac to PC and to learn how to use the vast array of design tools available on computer, and your appreciative and enthusiastic support has cheered them up in their struggles with the more arcane aspects of programmes like Photoshop and Illustrator!

I also want to thank those of you who've written to tell us that you won't be subscribing directly because you want to encourage your local newsagent or comic shop by buying all your magazines there. The local retailer network is absolutely vital in spreading the word about ANIME FX and many other publications to people who might not otherwise run across them, and I'm sure your retailer appreciates your support. And remember, if your local newsagent, comic shop or branch of WH Smith or Menzies doesn't have AFX on the shelves, ask for it! However, for anyone living miles from a comic shop, or for our many readers overseas, Debbie in Sussex and Julie in Ohio are always happy to answer your questions and solve all your subscription or back issue problems for you. You can find their numbers at the bottom of the lefthand column, so why not give them a call?

As I write the weather has just broken, and after what seems like months of blazing sunshine Britain is back to normal again, with rain pelting down outside the window. It's starting to put me in the mood for autumn, long evenings by the fire watching videos or reading, and, of course, for the annual ritual of our trip to Birmingham for ReConTanimeTed. This year's convention looks like being unmissable, with the promise of a more varied live programme and a range of activities to back up the multiple video tracks for which the committee is renowned. Whether you want to catch up on all the new releases you've missed, go mad in the dealers' room or just meet friends old and new, you'll find plenty to do. Maybe we'll see you there!

Yours animatedly,

Helen McCarthy
 Editor

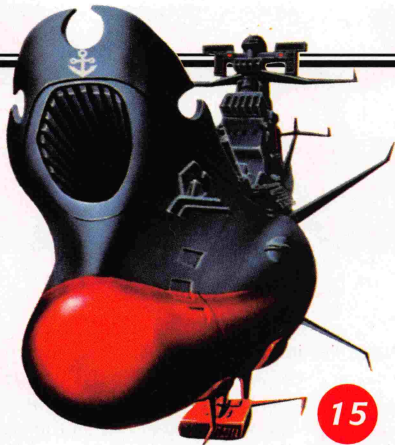


GODZILLA / MOTHRA © TOHO

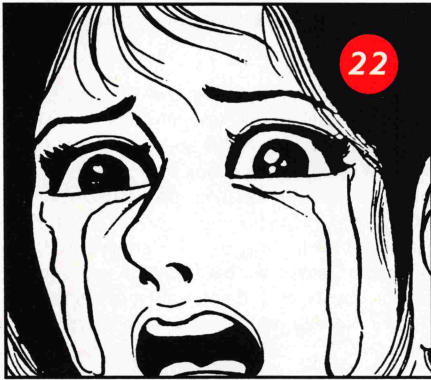
SFXPRESS is off on holiday: back next issue!

OOPS! A ghost in the machine transposed some data from news pages to reviews last issue; as a result we wrongly attributed the **BABEL II** manga to Masami Kurumada, when it is, of course, by Mitsuteru Yokoyama. Apologies to both gentlemen. And **FIVE STAR STORIES** appeared in **NEWTTYPE** not **ANIMAGE**. The **DRAGONBALL** pic is last issue's NewsScan was for the **PLAYSTATION** game, reviewed this issue, **NOT** the **SUPER FAMICOM** as stated.

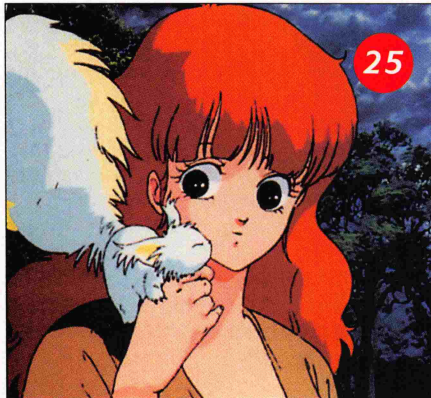
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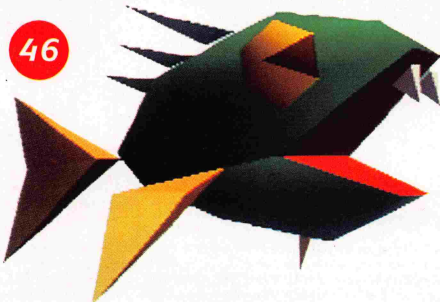


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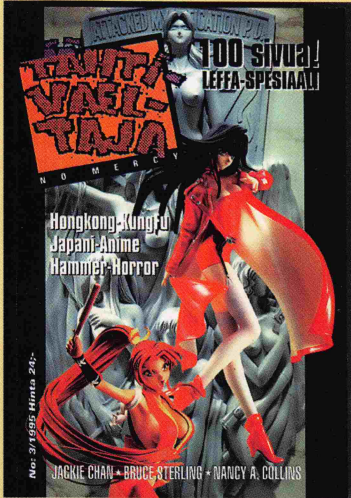
62 **FANZONE** - Fanzine reviews, Penpals, Contests and our fiendishly enjoyable Mind Break Quiz. How will you find the time to watch any anime?

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66 **MANGA MUNCHIES** - What's to eat?

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EUROPE



PIGS OVER SCANDINAVIA - CATBUS SCHEDULE REVISED

Is Britain fated to be the only country in the Western hemisphere without a Miyazaki release? Finnish magazine TAHTIVAELTAJA (STAR ROVER) dropped on our desks with the news that PORCO ROSSO was shown on Finnish TV on September 16th, with MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO scheduled a month later! C'mon Beeb, what are you up to? C4, where's Michael Grade's famed acumen? How many rhetorical questions can one hack get into a paragraph? Anime is really taking off in Finland according to journalist Toni Jerrman; STAR ROVER no. 3/95 has reviews of over 50 anime releases, plus Hong Kong film, horror, sf and more. You can write to STAR ROVER c/o Toni at Junailijankuja 1 B 29, 00520 Helsinki, Finland. You can also write to the BBC and independent channels asking why the so-called "best TV in the world" can find time for endless re-runs of antique comedies, American sitcoms and gameshows, but not for some of the highest-quality, most positive and affirmative storytelling in said world. Otherwise the catbus won't ever stop here.

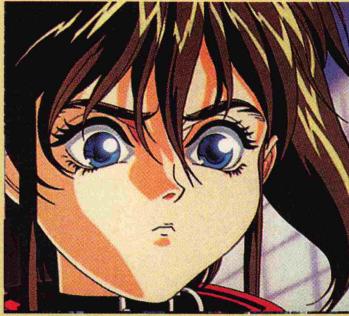
NEW FROM KISEKI

Just out from Kiseki, the pirate girl sf adventure SOL BIANCA - in subtitled format! SOL BIANCA 2 follows at the end of October, accompanied by Leiji Matsumoto's World War II anthology THE COCKPIT. And upcoming soon after: DIGITAL DEVIL.

Above: Digital Devil and right, Adventure Kid T-Shirt

Kiseki are also making a special offer to celebrate the budget release of ADVENTURE KID - an exclusive ADVENTURE KID t-shirt for just £5, plus £1 p&p. Send your name, address and payment to Kiseki Films, ADVENTURE KID T-SHIRT, 5 & 6 Parkside, Ravenscourt Park, London W6.

ARMITAGE IN THE UK!



Pioneer LDCE will release cybercop series ARMITAGE III in the New Year. The OAV series is already a hit in Japan and the USA and has been eagerly awaited by UK fans since its appearance in these pages last February. In the meantime fans can enjoy the unique antics of Tenchi & Co in the TENCHI MUYO SPECIAL and the further adventures of the KISHIN TROOPS.

GIANT ROBO

Yes, at last the hottest of the retro-anime fan favourites is scheduled for a UK release. Manga Video will unleash it on the shelves in January 96.

Also coming from MV, VAMPIRE

PRINCESS MIYU (see US News). And look for mecha drama MADOX-01 and the final bloodsoaked chapter of ANGEL COP along with part 2 of ORGUSS 02 on the shelves now!

WESTERN CONNECTION

One for the girls is coming soon from Western Connection in the shape of DARKSIDE BLUES, a tale of strange powers and gorgeous men. Don't panic, though, the weaker sex is not entirely neglected - fans of singing schoolgirls and Chinese dresses can look forward to more adventures from DEVIL HUNTER YOKO and the HUMMINGBIRDS.

BOOK LAUNCH DELAYED

Publication of Helen McCarthy's second book, THE ANIME MOVIE GUIDE: 1983-94, has been delayed until the Spring of 1996. The book, a follow-up to the successful ANIME! A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO JAPANESE ANIMATION, once again published by Titan, covers theatrical and video releases in one of the medium's most exciting decades and has been researched using Japanese, French, Italian and English language sources.

CHINMI HITS HARD!

Bloomsbury Publishing's gamble has paid off; their release of IRONFIST CHINMI in unflipped, Japanese-style format has been hugely popular, with the first two volumes selling out their 25,000 print run in two days. The initial six-volume run looks certain to be extended, and the first girls' title, SAILOR MOON, is in preparation with a planned release in Spring 1996.

HELP WITH HORROR

Film scholar Brigid Cherry is looking for help with her thesis on patterns of horror film viewing; she wants to hear from animated and live-action



Above: MADOX - 01 Below: VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU, New from Manga Video



horror film fans, in particular female fans. For more information or a copy of her questionnaire, write to Brigid at the Department of Film and Media Studies, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA, Scotland, or email her at BCHERRY@FESTIVAL.ED.AC.UK.

GET THE GOODS! NEW TONKAM CATALOGUE

French publishers Editions Tonkam have produced their first catalogue of manga, French manga translations and anime goods from Japan for two years. 30 pages in black and white and colour and an order form can be yours for just 20 francs (about £2.70 at current rates). Send your money orders or Eurocheques, made payable to TONKAM, to TONKAM, Service VPC, BP 356 - 75526 PARIS CEDEX 11, France.

TSUNAMI SOUNDS

The popular anime, manga and music magazine TSUNAMI has merged with music journal B MAG for a 'Japan Special'. The result is



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something else - lots of live and recorded music news, reviews and info plus articles on Japanese and Western animation and graphics; features on Chuck Prophet, Lou Barlow, Neil Young and Moebius rub shoulders with video reviews, Tokyo club scene reports and a style feature on how to dress like your fave manga heroine. All this hard style will set you back 30 francs plus postage, from B MAG 45, rue Mederic 92110 Clichy, France



USA

ANTARCTIC VAMP

If you're a fan of VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU, the elegant horror tale released on ANIMEIGO in the USA and due for UK release on Manga Video soon, you should look out for the translated manga from Antarctic Press. Interestingly, MIYU creator Narumi Kakinouchi is the daughter of famed writer, designer and director Toshihiro Hirano, who is a major creative force in MEGA-ZONE 23 part 1, FIGHT! ICZER-1 and many other fan favourite titles. Not surprisingly, he was a natural choice to direct the MIYU anime.

INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION

Our thanks to reader Dan Caggiano for sending us details of Expanded Entertainment, who distribute a wide range of animated video shorts from all over the world. If you enjoy all kinds of animation, ask them to put you on their mailing list and get details of all their titles. Write to Expanded Entertainment, Animation, PO Box 25547, Los Angeles, CA 90025, USA.

TEZUKA AWARDS CONTROVERSY

The Internet is buzzing, not just with concerns about JAILED, but with indignation over the announce-

ment that the Osamu Tezuka Awards, presented last year at ANIMEast, are this year to be voted on by a selected panel of industry professionals rather than by the fandom. The difficulty of selecting a panel without vested interests to support, but with enough expertise and credibility to do the job, has been pointed out. It's hard enough for a small group to include experts who can evenhandedly evaluate the technicalities of anime, manga art & writing, translations, soundtracks, music videos, performance, translation skill, journalistic and design excellence, without having to vote

on every one of those diverse fields as well! The debate continues to rage and will no doubt still be a matter of interest at this year's Tezuka Awards at the convention in New Brunswick on November 9-11.

WILD RUMOURS

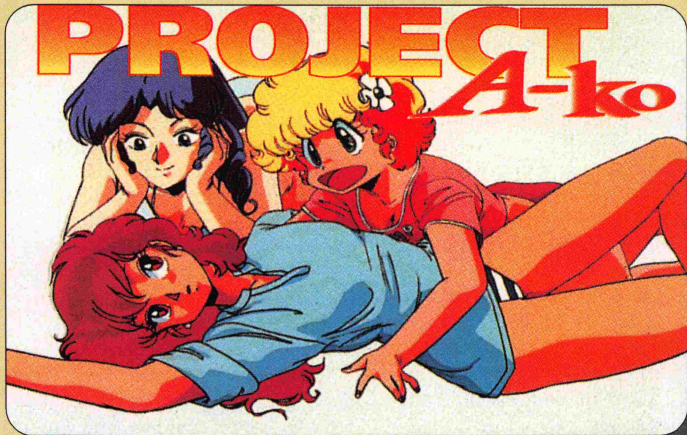
Two pretty wild ones are going round at the moment: that Bandai are planning to launch a certain wellknown mobile suit epic onto the US video market, and that the DRAGONBALL manga is closer than it's ever been to an American release. If it turns into hard news, we'll let you know!

RONIN WARRIORS WIN THROUGH

The American TV version of SAMURAI TROOPERS drew to a close this month, having been screened by almost a hundred TV stations. For the most part it was well received by US fans and seems to have done reasonably well in terms of viewing figures. SAILOR MOON starts its TV run this autumn, eagerly awaited by otaku, while little girls have already begun to buy the latest U.S. SAILOR MOON merchandise. In an interesting sidelight, we hear that Toei and Bandai are blocking the export of SAILOR MOON merchandise from



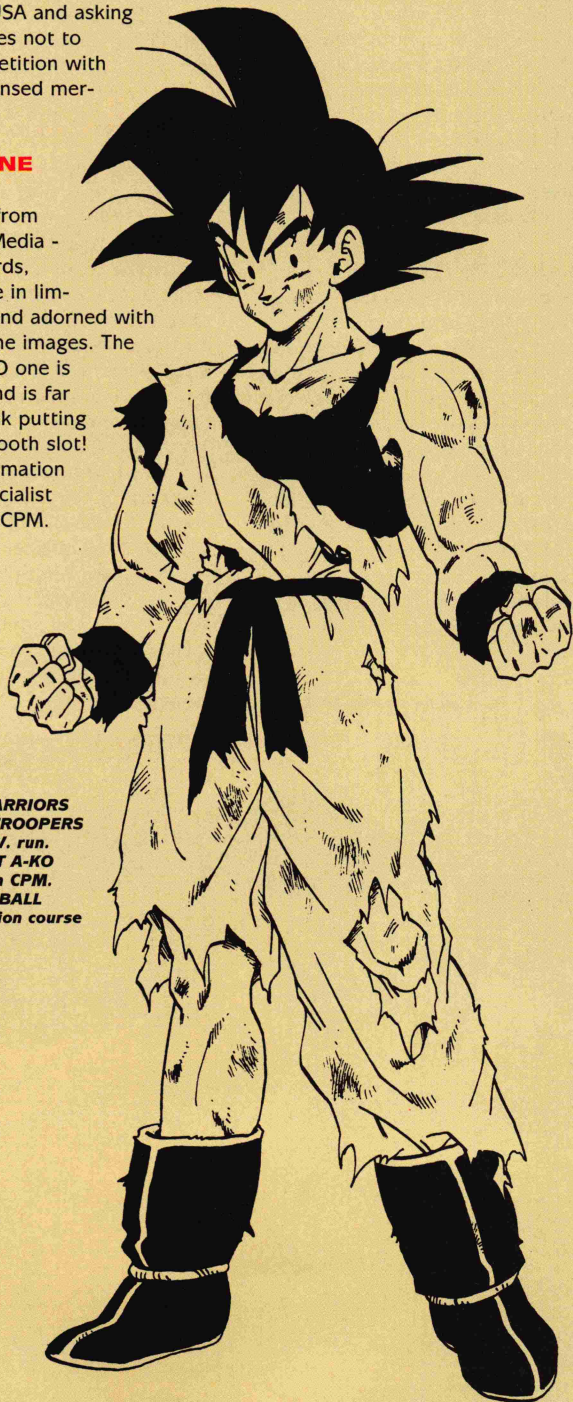
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Japan to the USA and asking American stores not to sell it in competition with the locally-licensed merchandise.

A-KO PHONE HOME

Another idea from Central Park Media - their phonecards, made available in limited editions and adorned with gorgeous anime images. The PROJECT A-KO one is shown here and is far too cute to risk putting into a phonebooth slot! Ordering information from your specialist store or from CPM.



Left: **RONIN WARRIORS** aka **SAMURAI TROOPERS** ends its U.S. T.V. run. Above: **PROJECT A-KO** phone card from CPM. Right: **DRAGONBALL** manga on collision course for the USA?



JAPAN

MACROSS THE MOVIES

The premiere of **MACROSS PLUS THE MOVIE** was scheduled for 23rd September, with showings planned in 9 Japanese cities. It's a compilation of the four OAVs plus an extra twenty minutes of new material into a two-hour extravaganza for mecha junkies and action freaks. The new material doesn't really change the story; set in 2040, it follows the OAV line.

MACROSS fans will be pleased to know there's another MACROSS movie on the starting blocks, based on TV series **MACROSS 7**. **GINGA GA ORE O YONDE** (The Galaxy is Calling Me) features Mirene, Basara and all their pals in a brand new story set in an arctic landscape - or, as the publicity handout puts it, "In a land dominated by snow and ice, Mirene, Basara and the others have to light a Fire."



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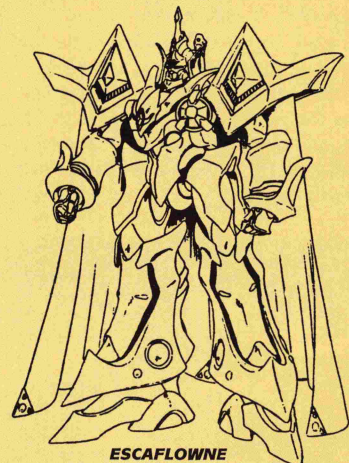
TV NOW



NURSE ANGEL LILIKA SOS, currently running on TV Tokyo, is a Sailor Moon clone with a different outfit, the 'Nurse Angel of Love and Justice'. Liliika Moritani is given the 'Angel Cap' as a birthday present by a girl who's just come back from living in exotic foreign parts (in England). But there's more to the cap than meets the eye, and it transforms Liliika into the Nurse Angel, giving her the power to do good, but also the problem of living a secret double life as a magical superheroine.

TV FUTURE

ESCAFLOWNE OF THE SKY is Shoji Kawamori's latest project, billed in **NEWTPE** as coming from an anime dream team. Chara designs are by the renowned Nobuteru Yuuki (**RECORD OF LODOSS WAR**, **ANGEL COP**) and the project will air on Japanese TV sometime in 1996. The story centres round typical 15-year-old schoolgirl Hitomi Kamizaki. She is troubled by visions of a knight and a dragon, until one day she finds herself mysteriously transported to planet Gaia, where these visions originate. There the Kingdom of Farnelia is under attack from the



ESCAFLOWNE

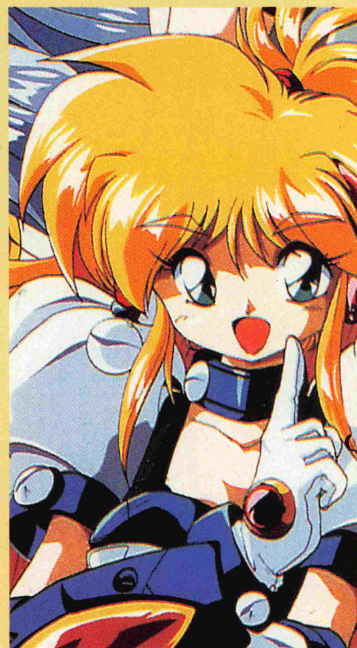
technologically-advanced Zaibahha Empire. Hitomi's 'knight in shining armour', Vern Farnel, sets off to save his kingdom with her help.

SAINT TALE is a TV series coming soon from Tokyo Movie Shinsha, and is based on the manga by

Megumi Tachikawa, serialised in Kodansha's Nakayoshi magazine. Meimi, a spunky student at St. Paulia's College, can transform into beautiful superheroine Saint Tale at night. This is a problem for the nuns, but Meimi's classmate Asuka Jr. thinks the supergal is just superb ... while Meimi wishes he'd look in her direction every once in a while.

OAV ACTION

The **GALAXY FRAULEIN YUNA** OAV series is being proclaimed as 'the last word in bishojo anime' - judge for yourself. Based on the original computer games and the story by Mika Akitada, the OAV series is directed by Yoshinobu Yamaguchi



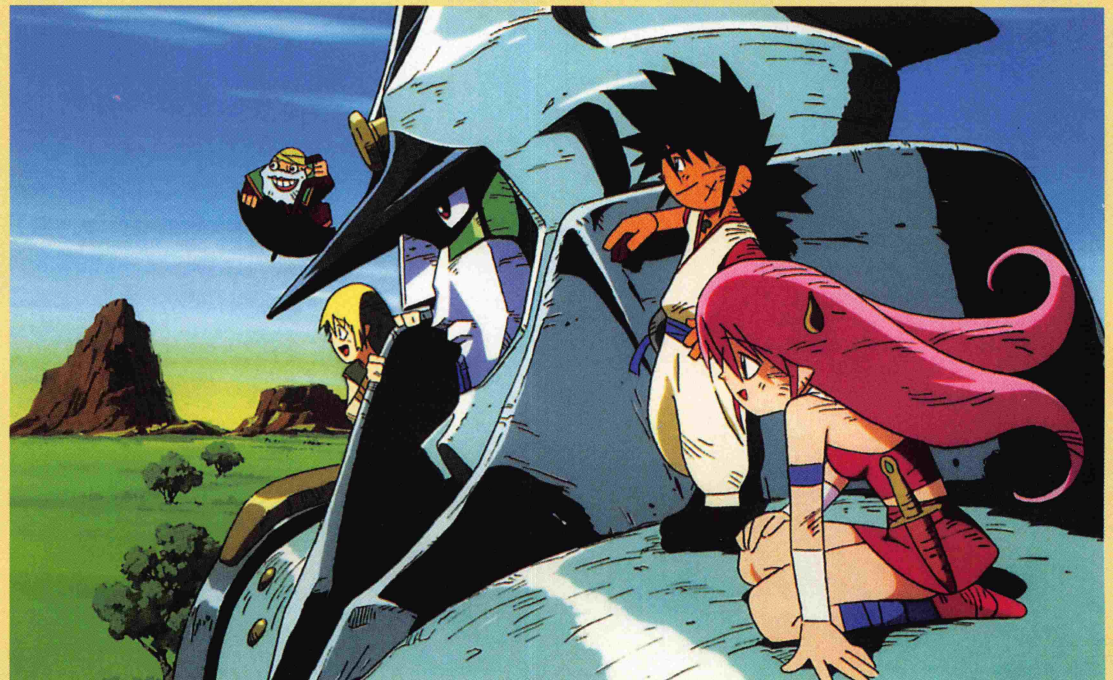
Above: **GALAXY FRAULEIN YUNA**

from Satori Akahori's screenplay. A new character, Misaki, is promised.

School stories are as popular as ever : **PHOBIA** is set in River Island College, where the hero, nice guy Mutsumi Narita, doesn't really fit in with his hormone-crazed classmates. His girlfriend Megumi doesn't fit in either, though it isn't obvious at first; but when monstrous repleinoids from another dimension start picking off the staff in the drama department, she reveals that she's really a time-hopping warrior from 2112 A.D., and she has a mission to complete ... And **MAGICAL ANGEL SQUAD**, a 6 part OAV series from Bandai Visual, features the adventures of five normal, happy, thoughtful high school girls who have their own little club which meets in secret to practice 'magic'. The girls get more than they bargain for when one of their summoning spells goes disastrously wrong - or should that be disastrously right?

The **YAMATO TAKERU** TV series continues with a new OAV series commencing in October. The TV series, on TBS, spanned 39 episodes but the last three were never broadcast, and these will be released first to form a bridge between the TV and OAV series before the new story starts in earnest. Set three years after the events of the first series, our hero Takeru is now 16 years old, and his village is enjoying a period of peace, when a meteorite lands nearby and carries with it a demonic fortress from Planet Izumo.

Below: **YAMATO TAKERU**



DARK BLUE FLEET is an OAV series from Tokuma Shoten, set in a parallel universe where World War II is being fought all over again. This time around, though, the Japanese are doing rather better than before.

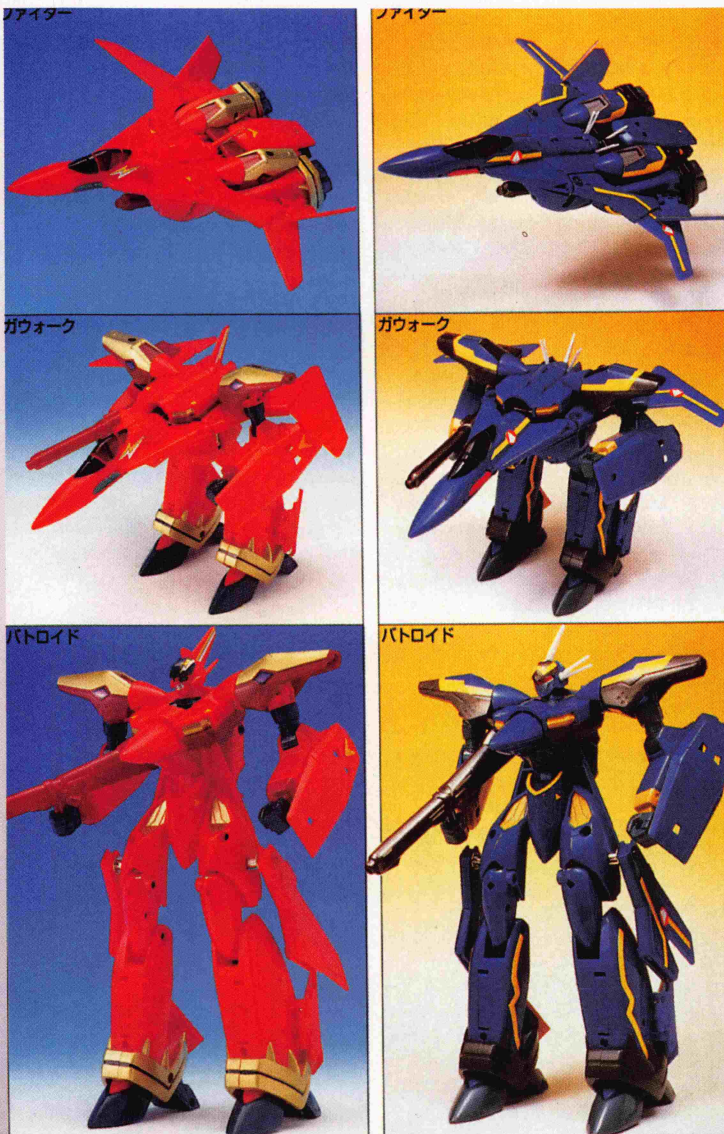
One of the greatest of mecha directors, Ryosuke Takahashi, whose work ranges from classic series like **ARMOURED TROOPER VOTOMS** to the recent Matsumoto OAV **THE COCKPIT**, wrote and directed **A DARK KNIGHT'S TALE** for Sunrise. Part one was shown on Nippon TV back in February; now it's available on video from VAP, and the computer gamed-based dark fantasy is taken a stage further with a second OAV from Takashi "GUNDAM" Imani.

AUSTRALIA

STOP PRESS FROM OZ ...

Australia has its own anime industry, and while quite a few of the titles are licensed from UK distributors, some come from other sources. One of particular interest to British fans right now is Kiseki Australia, licensees of our own Kiseki Films, who also get titles from American sources. One of these is the **RANMA 1/2** TV series, which has been appearing two episodes to a tape since August. Australia, of course, speaks English and shares the UK TV format. In view of the number of letters we get from deprived British **RANMA** fans (see **ANIMAIL** this and almost every other issue!), we thought this information might be of interest.

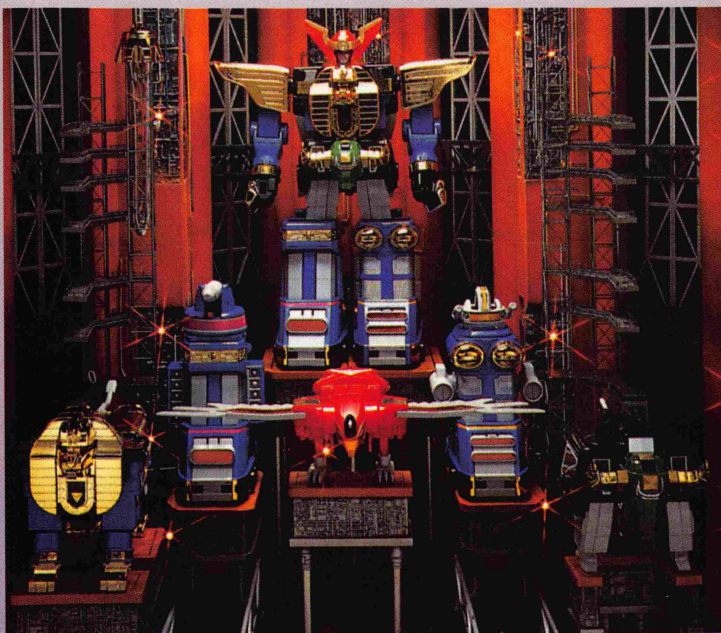




TOKYO TOY SHOW

June 1-2 1995

Report by **PETER EVANS**



From **BANDAI's** Catalogue: Top left: two (of four) transformable **VALKYRIE's** from **MACROSS 7**.

Top right: **MASTER GRADE GUNDAM RX-78-2** model kit (1/100 scale).

Bottom: Mecha toys from the **SENTAI** series **CHORIKU SENTAI OHRANGER** (Super power Task Force King Ranger).

Our intrepid reporter is the only man who has ever managed to catch a cold in Tokyo in June. So he did the only thing he could think of to cheer it up - he took it shopping.

A report from SAKURA STUDIO's Peter Evans, with pictorial material kindly provided by MASAOKI KATO.

One bright and cheerful Thursday ANIME FX's secret agent in Japan disguised himself as a member of the masucomi (otherwise known as 'the press') and journeyed across the cultural wasteland that is Tokyo. Out into the wilderness ne'er before travelled. Beyond Disneyland to ... Makuhari Messe.

And a right messe it is too! It's a big long thing that is divided into eight large halls by moveable walls. For this occasion, though, the entire building was in use for the Tokyo Toy Show '95. (I hear there were 100,000 attendees on the public days.) Makuhari is about 40 minutes from Tokyo station on the Keiyo line, roughly halfway between Tokyo and Chiba. As nowhere's go, it's

pretty bland. The area round the station looks like ten things to do with SRC (steel reinforced concrete) if you want to be called Mr. Exciting Civil Servant.

Bluffing his way into the show by using the unprecedented tactic of pretending to be himself, the secret agent got in, and, armed with his camera, proceeded to explore. The sights he saw rendered him incoherent, to wit :

Bandai had the biggest stand; then it was a toss-up between Tomy, Takara and Sega. There were toys for all occasions, even that infernal 'MAGIC, The Waster Of Money', Postman pat, Thomas the Tank Engine, and Disney. (They stopped me getting into their booth until they knew who I was, but that's all right as I find their stuff puerile. *POCAHONTAS* looks nice, though.) One end seemed to be devoted to TV games, and here you could find Namco, 3DO, Bandai (again!) NEC and the likes.

This year's hot anime toy titles are **MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH**, **WEDDING PEACH** and the perennial

BANDAI Kaiju (Monster)
Toys featuring **GAMMERA**,
GODZILLA and friends.

Bottom left: **GODZILLA**
"Charmy Water" Water Game
from **TOMY**

ガメラ



ガメラ大怪獣空中決戦シリーズ ガメラ、ギャオス 各¥1,800
ビッグスケールガメラ ¥5,000



プラスマウォーク 大怪獣ガメラ
¥4,980 単3電池4本使用



旧作ガメラシリーズ 各¥1,200



ガメラカーニバル ¥2,300



ゴジラシリーズ 各¥600~
19,800
スタンダードからB/O、R/C、
限定版まで、ボリューム満載!
バンダイ ゴジラシリーズ!



Center right: Terminal cuteness from **TOMY**
and **WEDDING PEACH**

SAILOR MOON. Other series were represented in much smaller ways; **SLAM DUNK**, **DRAGONBALL**, etc., were there, but they weren't exactly strutting round dressed as Umi-san, Ai Tenshi Wedding Peach or Chibi-Usa. The new Studio Ghibli anime was under-represented; it's **MIMI O SUMASEBA** and it looks as if it should be **MAJO NO TAKKYUBIN 2** (Japanese title for **KIKI'S DELIVERY SERVICE** - it means **WITCH'S EXPRESS DELIVERY**); the cat is cute, so is the heroine, **Nausikikisheeta 2**. There is now a National Trust reservation in Saitama-Ken called **TOTORO NO FURUSATO**, or Totoro's Forest; so far, the fund for this cause has gathered something over 100,000,000 yen! (Minimum donation is 3,000 yen; if anyone wants to donate, write to our revered editor and I'll get details.)

TOMY are really pushing their **WEDDING PEACH** toys; this is a girls' anime about the legendary 'Saint Weapon Four'. (I kid you not!) Their merchandise includes 'Saint Shutrai' for Angel Lily, a baton with flashing lights; 'Saint Tornado' for Angel Daisy, a giant bootle opener; 'Holy Hand-Grenade' for Wedding Peach - it's white, it beeps, flashes, and three is the number thou shalt count to [THWACK!!!! Keep your mind in this reality while you're writing, please - editor] Actually, it's called 'Saint Crystal', but the Python version is more fun **NINKU** is the show for boys, trying to be the replacement for last year's **YU YU HAKUSHO**. **DORAEMON** is for the tots.

Remember **TWISTER** from MB Games? Well, it was there! It's only 2980 yen too! [Approx £20 -Ed.]

BANDAI Basically, if it has giant robots, it's Bandai. Their stand had a lot of them, but only one was 6 metres high! These fantastic performing toys with their amazing shoulder pads and their mystic ability to reduce adults to tears sell fantastically well. **WING GUNDAM** is this year's new series. Old favourites were also in evidence: **SD GUNDAM**, **ULTRAMAN**, **GODZILLA**, **OHRANGER**, **MACROSS 7**. Bandai have a satellite channel that will be doing 18 hours a day next year! It's called **OTTACK BEAM** and is on CS Skyport. Ideal for fans of **GUNDAM**, **MACROSS**, **YAMATO** and assorted seiyuu. **SAILOR MOON** has new Sailor Senshi toys, like the 'Kaleidomon Scope' (not 'curried moon scope' as I at first thought!), a big pink thing that lights up at the end, and the 'Stallion revue', another holy hand-grenade. Bandai have a few other toys for people who faint at the mere thought of a set of five super Sailor Sneshi talking dolls that cost 3,980 yen each! They have **TONDE BUURIN**, **MARMALADE BOY**, **FUSHIGI YUUGI** (surprise hit, semi-historical adventure), **GODZILLA**, **MOTHR**, and even some games

for big kids -**DBZ ULTIMATE BATTLE 22** and **MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM** for the Sony Playstation. Old favourites **THOMAS**, **DUKE** and **SKARLOEY** are only 1,500 yen each.

TAKARA CHIBI MARUKO CHAN is being superseded by **GAKKOH NO UWASA**, **HANAKOSAN GA KITA**, about a ghostly school. Whether this is a good thing remains to be seen, but their booth was huge. Starting on the 7th of July there was a new merchandising vehicle called **NURSE ANGEL LILIKA SOS** for shogakusei (elementary school) girls. It's so cute, it will carry health warnings. Just seeing pictures of it causes grown men to strip off and dance - no, wait, that's the **Masaya** booth! The Japanese counterpart to that grotesque parody of femininity,



Barbie, is Rikachan, which is still going strong after many, many years. She's betterlooking and around 3,000 yen.

What's a castle doing here? It's **KADOKAWA**, promoting their summer movies, **LEGEND OF CHRYSANIA** and **SLAYERS**. The former is set in the world of **LODOSS WAR**, the latter is basically Megumi Hayashibara destroying everything in sight! They are bringing out a **LODOSS** game on the Super Famicom (promo filmed in France) and a game called **TOKYO DUNGEON** that is supposedly written by **Roe R. Adams III K.T.J.** (Knight of the Temple of Jerusalem!), but that is in mid-crisis as something crucial is late.

The Pippin (from **Bandal** again) is a much more exciting prospect than Nintendo's vaporous 'U64', and more powerful than the 3D0. Stick a hard disk and a keyboard on and you have a complete Macintosh. There was a short techno-rave promotion in the theatre they had on their stand. Soon we will be seeing a new breed of Internaut, as the proletariat get Net access from their video games and joysticks. (Pause to preach doom and gloom.) Other exciting prospects are, of course, the **Sega Saturn** and **Sony Playstation**. There were not many new and exciting games for either platform, just enough to whet the appetite and give one some hope - **VIRTUA FIGHTER 2** **Virtua Cop**, **MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH** (Clamp are going to be very rich!), **BLUE SEED**, **QUO VADIS** (with chara design by Mikimoto) for the Saturn; **AIR COMBAT**, **ZXED**, **VAMPIRE THE NIGHT WARRIORS** for the Playstation, and some other stuff that was so unfinished it crashed every thirty seconds.

MASAYA The nicest thing you could say about their booth is, what it lacks in size it makes up in volume. They were **VERY** loud! Promoting their latest game (I call it **MUSCLE!** for lack of anything more intelligent to call it!) they had 4 superb physical specimens in a great display of homo-erotic dancing and bulging biceps - one girl in white, one caucasian, two blacks. They were good, lots better than the dancing girls at the **Namco** stand. No idea what the game is like, but who cares? **MUSCLE!** The women loved it, the men looked sheepish. Everyone went deaf.

So much show! Next time I go, I'll take lots of aspirin and try not to catch a cold the day before ...

魔法騎士の必須アイテム!!
モコナのペンダント付!

伝説の手袋

価格	1,980円	入数	24	バーコード	319960
商品サイズ(mm)	W130×H120×D30				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W140×H155×D35				

主人公「光」の必殺アイテム!

ガールズコレクション 光の剣ブチ

価格	1,200円	入数	36	バーコード	319518
商品サイズ(mm)	H300				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W150×H317×D37				

かわいいうちキャラたちの宝石が輝きます。

ブチキャライト(4種)

価格	各800円				
入数	48	バーコード	別途記載	電池	ボタン電池2個(内蔵)
商品サイズ(mm)	H約35~60				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W70×H145×D30				

キャラクターレリフがおしゃれなデジタルウォッチ

キャラウォッチャー(4種)

価格	各1,000円				
入数	46	バーコード	別途記載	電池	ボタン電池内蔵
商品サイズ(mm)	W200×H40×D20				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W114×H252×D30				

吸盤でピタッ! チビ・マスコットたち。

キャラびた(5体セット)

価格	1,000円	入数	48	バーコード	319441
商品サイズ(mm)	約H35				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W140×H50×D25				

身長7cmのミニキャラドール。

魔法ブチ騎士(5体セット)

価格	2,000円	入数	12	バーコード	319533
商品サイズ(mm)	H約80				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W260×H140×D45				

かわいいうちキャラたちといつでも、どこでもいっしょ!

ブチキャラキーチェーン(4種)

価格	各450円	入数	90	バーコード	別途記載
商品サイズ(mm)	H約30~65				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	吊り下げ台紙 W395×H150				

魔法騎士になりきってしまおう!!

ガールズコレクション(3種)

価格	各4,980円	入数	12	バーコード	別途記載
商品サイズ(mm)	身長100cm~110cm用(4才前後用)				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W210×H360×D40				



アニメキャラの魅力そのままからゼンタイ欲しくなる!!

魔法騎士(3種)

価格	各2,980円	入数	24	バーコード	別途記載
商品サイズ(mm)	H約280				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W175×H230×D55				

魔法騎士も、真の魔法騎士の究極の防具!

魔法騎士防具(3種)

価格	各2,400円	入数	24	バーコード	別途記載
商品サイズ(mm)	W210×H250×D55				

魔法の騎士達の麗なるドレス!

魔法騎士ドレス(3種)

価格	各2,980円	入数	24	バーコード	別途記載
商品サイズ(mm)	H約280				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W175×H230×D55				

魔法騎士のアクセサリー!

魔法騎士アクセサリー(3種)

価格	各2,400円	入数	24	バーコード	別途記載
商品サイズ(mm)	H約280				
パッケージサイズ(mm)	W175×H230×D55				

Top and far right: **MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH** goodies from **SEGA**

Right: Cuddly **DORAEMON** key ring from **TOMY**



MANGA IN FOCUS



ARGONAUTS REBORN

The Comic Book Adventures of the STAR BLAZERS

by JIM SWALLOW

Below: Studio Go! artist Bruce Lewis did this picture especially for Anime FX



Below: Page from STAR BLAZERS issue #0 (Argo Press)

Of the many anime series that made the leap from Japan to Western TV programming, STAR BLAZERS is perhaps the best remembered. Preceding its translated brethren in Harmony Gold's ROBOTECH by several years, STAR BLAZERS' multi-layered ongoing storyline was a first for children's programming used to a diet of kiddie pablum. Fuelled by the 'sci-fi' mania ignited by the release of STAR WARS, US dubbing studio Westchester Films brought their adaptation of the landmark SPACE CRUISER YAMATO series to 1979 viewers eager for epic stellar adventures. Like ROBOTECH after it, STAR BLAZERS was to be the first experience of many anime enthusiasts, and its markedly different approach to storytelling (which shone through even after copious edits) introduced a whole generation of fans to Japan's animation culture.

The original show saw the light of day in 1974 as a series on Japanese television, and like the Western sf phenomenon STAR TREK, YAMATO was destined to run and run. Three complete series, each with its own distinct story arc, five feature films and two new spin-off projects marked the journey of this galaxy-spanning saga from humble roots to classic status. Despite plots that threaded into three different timelines, the creation of Yoshinobu Nishizaki and Reiji Matsumoto (who went on to create CAPTAIN HARLOCK) has become a bona-fide 'cert', demonstrating an enduring desire by fans to see the adventures of a beloved cast of characters.

Westchester Films' distribution of STAR BLAZERS began with a 52 episode run that adapted the 1974-5 series SPACE CRUISER YAMATO and its 1978-9 follow-up SPACE CRUISER YAMATO II. Years later, as the home video market for classic 'cult' shows and anime built up in the USA, Westchester set up Kidmark to market the show in this new arena. Broken down back into their original series, the two 'seasons' were sold as THE QUEST FOR

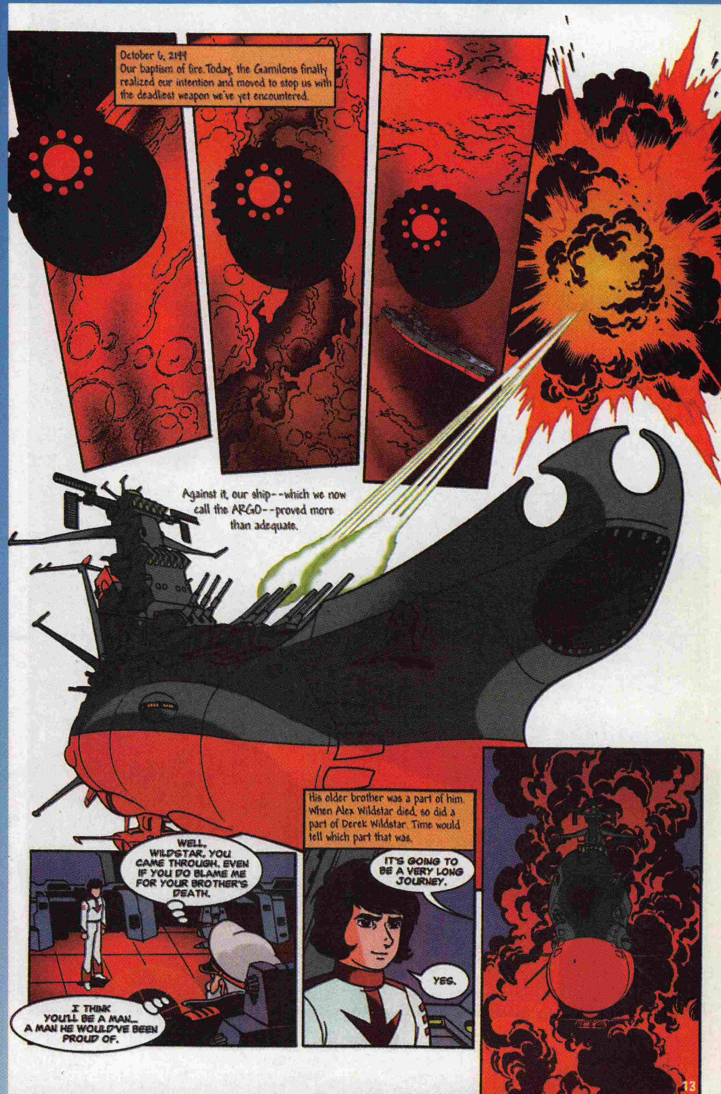
ISCANDAR (available here in the UK on the Kiseki Films label) and THE COMET EMPIRE, with the later third, sometimes called the 'lost', season, THE BOLAR WARS. This was Westchester's translation of the 25 episodes of the 1980-1 SPACE CRUISER YAMATO III, which ran on US TV in a very limited area. Although name changes and cuts were rife throughout the shows, many fans felt that the essential message of YAMATO had remained unchanged in STAR BLAZERS; certainly the show never found itself

under the same critical barrage that the later ROBOTECH series suffered. Perhaps the most prominent difference was the name of the starship herself. The reborn battleship Yamato was renamed in honour of the Greek legend of Jason and the Golden Fleece, simply christened - The Argo.

1987 saw the arrival of a new addition to the STAR BLAZERS universe in the form of an original, four part comicbook series from independent comics publisher Comico. Having

won anime fan favour for their serialisations of the ROBOTECH segments MACROSS, MASTERS and NEW GENERATION, Comico now embarked on a new mission. Not only was the STAR BLAZERS TV show largely off the air, unlike the syndicated ROBOTECH, but the comic scripts were all-new, unlike the screen-to-page ROBOTECH adaptations. Comico teamed Phil Foglio and Doug Rice, who had both worked on the excellent anime-influenced DYNAMO JOE series for First Comics, to create the words and pictures for the book. STAR BLAZERS was the first version of the YAMATO saga to see print in the West, and the first original story in that format since the end of Matsumoto's manga version some years earlier. Bringing long-time YAMATO fan Robert Fenelon aboard to introduce readers to the story, Comico bravely launched the book into a market that hadn't seen STAR BLAZERS in over seven years - and outsold their ROBOTECH stablemate by 300%.

Foglio and Rice created an adventure designed to dovetail smoothly into the STAR BLAZERS chronology, a sequel rather than a side story, that took place in the gap between the finale of THE COMET EMPIRE story arc and the opening shots of THE BOLAR WARS series. The COMET premise had dealt with an invasion by a civilisation living on an artificial comet fortress, which the Argo crew had, in true YAMATO tradition, successfully vanquished at great personal cost and with loss of life ... The miniseries followed on with a smart revenge tale that saw the Argo subverted by a band of religious fundamentalist renegades exiled from the Comet Empire, seeking to finish what their brethren had begun, namely the destruction of Earth. Despite a *deus ex machina* ending (which, again, fits the YAMATO tradition) the story held up well over its spread, tying in several dangling threads from THE COMET EMPIRE and guesting all the best-known and most favoured characters. Doug Rice's internal and



cover art kept a consistent standard, doing well to emulate the look of the series while keeping his own distinctive manner evident.

Given the sales success of STAR BLAZERS, it was strange to note that Comico chose not to follow up the series with another until two years later, in May of 1989. Westchester Films had been encouraged enough by the interest in STAR BLAZERS to prepare the 1988 home video release of the three series, & the popularity of the first comics series helped cement that decision ... A year on, Comico recruited the late Markalan Joplin (ex ROBOTECH comics writer) to bring STAR BLAZERS volume 2 to life. A five-part tale this time, V2 also fitted into the COMET EMPIRE - BOLAR WARS divide. Despite Joplin's unfamiliarity with the series, he was given a crash course by Fenelon & decided to use the ministries to explain away a major plot discrepancy in the misnaming of an important supporting character as a 'B' story backdrop to the main action. But Joplin's untimely death meant that the explanation went astray when Messrs Foglio and Rice were swiftly brought in to complete the book, and the 'error' remains uncorrected. Art chores on V2 were handled by Harrison Fong (who created MECHA for Dark Horse's abortive colour comics line) and Bill Anderson. Fong's more organic art style made a strong difference from Rice's cleaner lines in V1 and the look of the book gained a darker edge as a result. The main plotline widened the focus and introduced new cast members as well as a new force of adversaries, in a net of smaller plots and sidelines that worked well, though creating the impression of being slightly rushed. One wonders if a sixth issue might have spread the story thinner & made it handle more smoothly ... Again, a rapid last-act solution appears to seal the ending in true (albeit repetitive) YAMATO fashion.

Six years on, and Westchester's rights to STAR BLAZERS have reverted to their owners, who in turn have licenced Voyager Entertainment to market the YAMATO/STAR BLAZERS canon. In association with comics group Studio Go! (who work with CPM Comics on their GALL FORCE, MD GEIST, PROJECT A-KO and CYBER CITY OEDO titles), Voyager have formed Argo Press to publish a new STAR BLAZERS comics series, adapting the YAMATO : THE NEW VOYAGE feature. Beginning with an #0 issue that cleverly recounts the events of QUEST FOR ISCANDAR through a ship's log, the series continues with a focus on the 'noble antagonist' character Desslok's perception of pivotal STAR BLAZERS events as a lead in to the NEW VOYAGE series. The STUDIO GO! team hope to publish more stories, both adaptations and originals, in the future.



Back cover & splash page artwork from #1 of COMICO's second Star Blazers series



MARKALAN JOPLIN
WRITER
HARRISON FONG &
BILL ANDERSON
ARTISTS
BOB PINAHA
LETTERER
JULIE SZCESNY
COLORIST
MICHAEL EURY
EDITOR

COMICOGRAPHY

STAR BLAZERS colour
four-issue limited series
published by Comico from
April 1987 to July 1987

Writer/Co-plotter :
Phil Foglio.
Penciller/Co-Plotter :
Doug Rice.
Inker : Mike Chen.
Letterer : Bob Pinaha.
Colourist : Tom Reilly.
Cover Art : Doug Rice.

- #1. S.O.S. Argo
- #2. The Prisoner and the Power
- #3. Target - Argo
- #4. Sacrifice

STAR BLAZERS Volume 2
colour five-issue limited series
published by Comico
from May 1989 to
September 1989

Writers : Markalan Joplin
& Phil Foglio.
Plotters : Phil Foglio,
Doug Rice and
Markalan Joplin.
Artists : Harrison Fong &
Bill Anderson.
Letterers : Bob Pinaha &
Ken Holeczynski.
Colourist : Julie Szcesny.
Cover art : Ken Steacy

- #1. The Jackals Come To Feed
- #2. Life During Wartime
- #3. The Enemy Revealed.
- #4. A Blast From The Past
- #5. Crescendo

STAR BLAZERS :
The Magazine of SPACE
BATTLESHIP YAMATO
colour
limited series,
published by Argo Press
from March 1995 onwards

Writer & Artist :
Tim Eldred.
Publication Design :
Bruce Lewis.
Colourist :
Albert Deschesne.
Manufacturing : John Ott.
Cover Art : Tim Eldred.

- #0. Scarlet Scarf
 - #1. The Gift
- Forthcoming : Adaptation
of YAMATO : THE NEW
VOYAGE

Special thanks to the Studio
Go! crew - John Ott, Tim
Eldred and Bruce Lewis, and to
YAMATO guru Robert Fenelon.



One of the senior figures in the anime industry and one of the funniest, most delightful guests at ANIME EXPO was Noboru Ishiguro, whose career spans the whole of the modern history of anime from the 60s to the present. Ishiguro-sensei gave a wonderful talk about the beginnings of his long and distinguished career, the birth of Japanese fandom and SPACE CRUISER YAMATO, and answered questions. HELEN MCCARTHY was there to hear him.



THE TALK (a transcript of Ishiguro-sensei's translated words)

When I graduated, there was really no future in the Japanese film industry; they were firing, not hiring! TV seemed the same. The anime industry was the only one hiring. Until then, animators had existed only in Toei's studios, producing one animated feature a year, and in a couple of small studios that produced commercials. Back then, anyone who could draw cartoons could become an animator! I did some 8mm film in college, so I already knew the basic techniques of animation, and the first studio I joined didn't have a senior animator to train me; so I just did my work at my own pace, as best I could.

It was really unprecedented then to make a weekly TV show. The only way we could do it was by using stamina and the old spirit! Of course, some things were easier. There was no such thing as a video cassette recorder back then, so once the animation made it onto TV the day was ours. Even if a character wearing a blue cloak showed up with a red cloak next week, it was a done deal! We could convince anyone who commented that he was

mistaken - after all, it could only be checked if there were re-runs of the show! In this sense, modern animators have it tough. Their work can be checked and scrutinised via the vcr in minute details - so they don't take risks. We spent many all-nighters researching how to get the maximum animation with the minimum number of cels, but now there are animators who can't get a sense of movement when they should be able to do it easily. The soul of Japanese animation is really to emphasise the emotional content by freezing the action -and also to streamline actions to reduce cel content!

When I started out, I really wanted to direct, but the shortage of artists meant it took me 5 years. I'd read science fiction since my schooldays, and I wanted to direct animated sf. Back then, though, the anime industry was presumed to be for kids, so everyone assumed that sf animation would flop - because a space background had no diversity, and would bore kids. Then, ten years on, in 1974, I heard that someone was making a fully fledged sf animation feature, with mecha by the best designer in

Japan, Reiji Matsumoto, and a serious story - it was SPACE CRUISER YAMATO, and it was exactly what I wanted. The fact that the story had not been animated before inspired me, and I signed on as director of animation.

It was the start of a long struggle. Looking back, it might sound humorous, but not a single animator had grasped the concept of gravity -

NOBORU ISHIGURO - THE ANIME EXPO PANEL

all the explosions drooped down like fireworks! For the first three episodes I had to draw all the explosions and show the animators what to do. These days SF animation is the norm, and you might suppose this wouldn't happen, yet in the very first episode of LEGEND OF GALACTIC HEROES the same mistake was made, 15 years later! Look at the opening voice-over sequence and you'll see that all the sculptured busts of heroes floating in space explode, and then crumble downwards, as if there were gravity in space!

SPACE CRUISER YAMATO set sail on her broadcast in October 1974, with all our hopes aboard. We were aiming at a 12% audience rating, but the first episode got 7%, and it was no better than 5-7% all the way to the last episode. One thing that might have affected us is that the show ran opposite HEIDI, GIRL OF THE ALPS, which was Hayao Miyazaki's big break.

We were also soon lagging behind schedule because of our care for production standards. By the time episode 3 was aired, we were delivering the film on the day of broadcast and I was pretty much living at the studio. The producer tried to fire me three times for using all my own ideas and the techniques I'd dreamed



MEGAZONE 23
Part 1

up over the years. Looking back, I think that first series of SPACE CRUISER YAMATO is the show that's closest to my own style.

Two months into the broadcast a completely unexpected phenomenon started to happen. High school and college students started to come to the studio in

groups, and told us that they loved the show, despite the ratings. They'd even raid our garbage cans for sketches and so on. I would attach a film strip to a used cel and give one to every

visiting fan; in retrospect, I could have made a fortune, but at that time used cels were just industrial waste. Tatsunoko were burying used cels in their yard to get rid of them - you could probably dig there now and find a used cel or two!

Because of the low ratings, and because we were ¥20,000 per episode over budget, the producer, Mr. Nishizaki, shortened the 39 episode schedule to 26 episodes. When he decided this, episode 20 was already in production. That's why it took the YAMATO 25 episodes to reach Iscandar and just one to come back! There was a character who was supposed to show up in the final 13 episodes, which had been cut; the art was all done, and he was very charismatic, so I recommended the designer, Matsumoto, to do a story based on him. That was Captain Harlock.

While YAMATO was facing an early demise, the fans were forming clubs and rooting for us; it was the start of anime fandom. But the producer

was in a serious financial rut, and he couldn't care less for this. After researching many options he decided to sell YAMATO to American television. Someone told him a feature would be easier to sell, so he edited the series into 2 hours. The fans heard about this, and started asking to see it, and he thought of renting a theatre for a YAMATO convention.

But then demand spread, and he realised this could be a business opportunity. He started negotiations with all the movie theatres in Tokyo, but they all refused him. Finally he found a little four-theatre franchise that agreed to release the feature he had edited from the cancelled show.

He gathered the YAMATO fan club members in Tokyo into his office, gave each of them 20 posters to put up, asked them to request the theme song from radio DJs, and to sell tickets! The fans did all this for no money, just for pure love of YAMATO, and their zeal accomplished something new in the industry. 100,000 tickets sold in three days, and the media took notice. It was the start of the so-called 'anime boom'. Over 300 people stood in line from midnight the day before the first screening; the police were called out, and we were on every news programme. We went down to talk to the fans in line, and the producer was so excited he started to shake their hands! I was very happy myself. The breakthrough that took anime from something for kids to an adult medium started here. The selfless devotion of the fans who worked to make this movie recognised has a lot in common with the fans working here at this convention.

MEGAZONE 23
Part 2

Overnight there was a YAMATO boom. The second feature was started, and the producer became a millionaire. That year, STAR WARS was released and there was a massive sf boom also - a movie called 'sf' did well. ANIMAGE magazine started, and its premiere issue had the new YAMATO feature on the cover.

After the feature was produced, work started on the second YAMATO TV series. To be honest, I was hesitant about joining the staff. The boom in new shows meant that there were less good animators available, and I wasn't sure I could maintain the quality of the first series. As I feared, the first episode was pathetic, but we still got 27% of the ratings, whereas the first episode of series one got only 7% - how I wish it had been the other way round! The producer gained confidence from YAMATO's success and the show started to feature his true love, militarism; the sf element gradually faded away, and so I said 'Arrivederci' with YAMATO 2.



I pursued my interest in sf and went on with MEGAZONE 23, MACROSS, and LEGEND OF GALACTIC HEROES. It's hard to get an original story funded today in Japan, but I have a few ideas and I'm trying to get them animated. The wave of US movies that hit Japan a few years back and influenced anime is coming back now in the form of an anime influence on US movies; in turn this will feed back to influence Japanese kids, and maybe something else from Japan will surprise your kids in 20 years! Until I was eighteen, I believed absolutely in the Land of Makebelieve - Hollywood. Back then, I didn't even imagine ever coming to the USA, let alone speaking to you like this. Hollywood gave me my dreams.

Ishiguro-sensei then answered questions from the audience

Q *Is there any particular movie or director that influenced you?*

A Too many to mention! Thirty or forty years ago I was very influenced by John Ford and Alfred Hitchcock - I could go on naming directors and movies for ever!

Q *What are your views on computers in animation?*

A They can be very useful. Right now, we are using a system called ANIMEL and making a video game; we're producing about two and a half minutes of footage using Haruhiko Mikimoto's charas, which I'm directing.



Q Was *MACROSS* your idea?

A This is a very long story for another panel! The original idea came from Studio Nue, well, it was really three ideas in one. Mikimoto was then a young animator at Artland and had produced some beautiful original chara designs; when we decided to use his charas, the senior animators all resigned! So, I decided we'd just make the whole show using raw recruits. Back then, all these great names like Ichiro, Itano, Kawamori and Hirano had no track record, so the TV producer and TV station just relied on my own track record! But the TV producer was an sf fan, and he had faith in me. That was a unique experience. It would be impossible to reproduce it today.

Q Do you still have time to read SF, and who are your favourite authors?

A Recent sf, like the works of William Gibson, I find hard to comprehend! It's difficult to find time to keep up with reading, and I find that my interests are shifting more towards non-fiction.

Q *YAMATO* was a completely new vision - how did you inspire your staff? Did you recruit new young animators, or enthuse the older ones?

A Back then, there wasn't the concept that *YAMATO* was to be a new kind of show, so it was a trying experience to give all the 'old hands' a new vision. At the time I was only trying to make something entertaining; I couldn't only say I had a 'new vision' in retrospect. Anyway, if the story is entertaining, it doesn't matter if it's old-fashioned or new.

Q Who, today, is trying to adhere to the concept of wholeness in creativity which *YAMATO* embodied? And do you have a secret dream project?

A In terms of boldness, there are lots of talented animators who could do killer animation; but because of the level of scrutiny things get today, animation has to be really meticulous, and that can restrict boldness. As for a secret project, of course I have one! It's already 10 years old but it would make a great feature. In Japan today it's impossible to get an original idea produced - but in the American market it might be possible. If you have any ideas, please let me know!

Opposite Page

Far left: PHOENIX 2772

Left: QUEEN OF 1000 YEARS

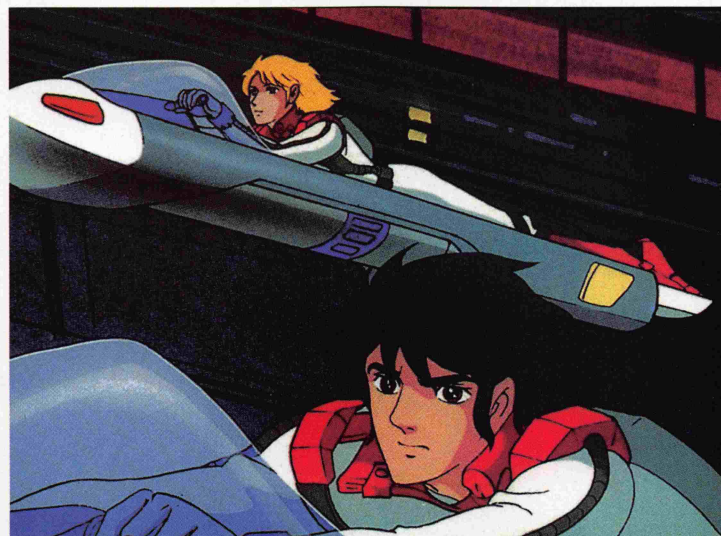
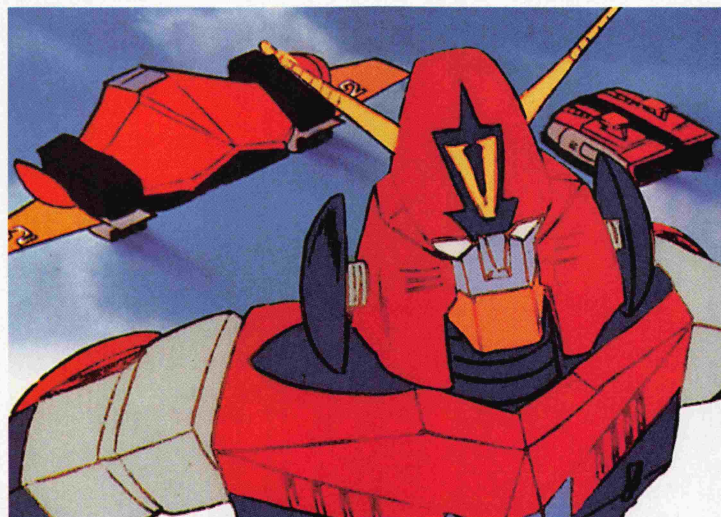
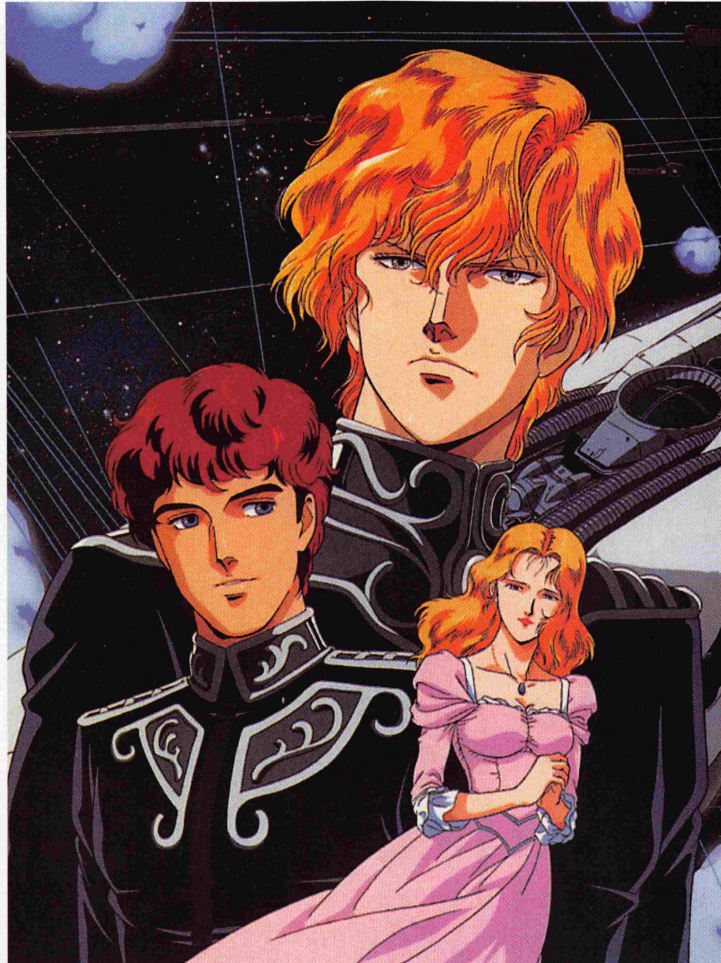
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Top: LEGEND OF GALACTIC HEROES

Center: COMBATTLER V

Bottom: THUNDERBIRDS 2086

**Thanks to Anime Expo
for the listing of
Ishiguro-san's work in
their Press Kit**



NOBORU ISHIGURO - A LIFE IN ANIME

DIRECTOR

Space Crusier Yamato Movie
Space Cruiser Yamato 2nd Series
Farewell Space Cruiser Yamato
Space Cruiser Yamato New Voyage
Super Dimensional Fortress Macross
Super Dimensional Century Orguss
Legend of Galactic Heroes
Legend of Galactic Heroes Movie

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Megazone 23 Part II
Legend of Galactic Heroes
Bakusou Circuit Roman Twin

ORIGINAL CREATIONS

Megazone 23 Part 1
Megazone 23 Part 2
Star Cat Full House

PRODUCER

Space Cruiser Yamato
Future Boy Conan
Megazone 23 Part 1
Ashita No Joe
Thunderbirds 2086
Kunimatsu-sama no Odouri-dai
Yokai Ningen Bem
Muumin
Time Bokan series
New Dokonjou Guile
Chisai na Biking Bikke
Tokimeki Twilight
Topo Gigo

SUPERVISOR

Tetsuwan Atom Color Version
Macross The Movie (Do You
Remember Love?)
Megazone 23 Part 1
Phoenix 2772
Queen of a Thousand Years (Queen
Millenia)
Bubblegum Crash!
Locke the Superman (Legend of Lord
Leon)
Thunderbirds 2086
World Literary Masterpiece Fairytale :
Anderson's Tales
Wansa-kun
Blue Flame
Koishi no Mainichi
Shonen Ashibe
Tottoi
Buchigiri
Wandering King Border
Yokai Ningen Bem
Tokimeki Twilight
Top Jojo
Star Cat Full House
Private Detective, Dokiseizou Trouble
Note Hard & Loose
Mikan Enikki

STORYBOARDS

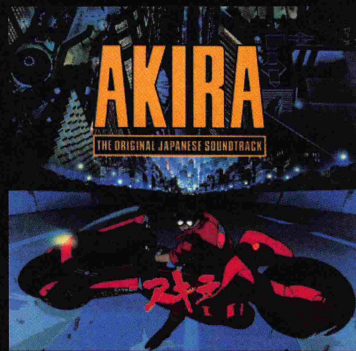
New Lupin III
Space Cruiser Yamato
Tetsuwan Atom Colour Version
Legend of the Galactic Heroes
Aim for the Ace! Memorial Collection
Hoshi No Ko Chobin
Combattler V
Ninja Hattari-kun
Time Slip 10,000 Years
Chisai na Biking Bikke
Tokimeki Twilight
Top Jojo
Private Detective, Dokiseizou Trouble
Note Hard & Loose
Mikan Enikki

SCRIPT

Top Jojo
Star Cat Full House
Heavy
Private Detective, Dokiseizou Trouble
Note Hard & Loose

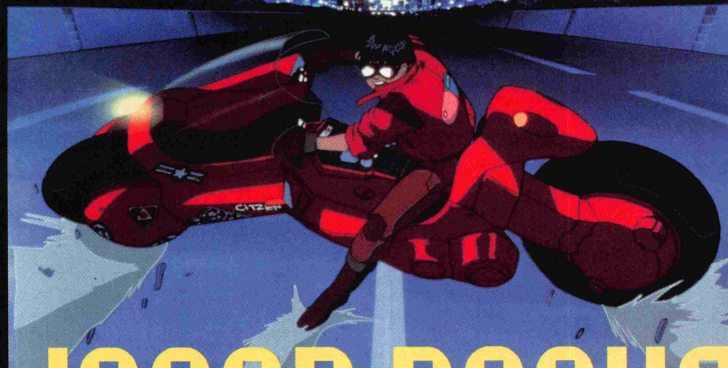
JONATHAN CLEMENTS looks at some of Demon Records' anime CD releases

With notable exceptions, film music normally falls into one of two categories. The first is that of tunes owned by the distributors, stuck on to squeeze enough material onto a cash-in soundtrack album. Thus the need for a scene in a disco, or a radio that gets switched off after three seconds. In anime this normally manifests itself as the opening and ending themes, which bear little relation to the show itself, but might help garner a little extra publicity if they chart. The other category is the truly 'incidental', composed around available visuals rather than stuck on top of them. This leads to short, disparate bursts of music from a composer who knows his efforts will go unappreciated. Luckily for us, the Demon range of anime CDs seems lacking in both the soundtrack sins, and their lead titles represent a strong beginning.



AKIRA ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

Composed & conducted by Shoji Yamashiro. PSCD7
There's little to say about the Akira soundtrack that hasn't already been said. From the lowliest fanzine to the hallowed heights of *Sight & Sound* or *Empire*, the score has been praised as a fitting complement to the state-of-the-art animation. Operatic and Noh choirs combine with traditional Japanese instruments and electric guitars in what has come to be known as a post-rock soundtrack. Amidst it all

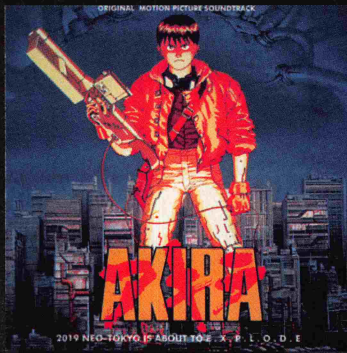


JAPAN ROCKS VARIATIONS ON A THEME

are soundbites from the film, and one or two complete battle scenes complete with grunts and screams. Great fun for anime fans, and guaranteed to annoy the neighbours if you turn it up to eleven.

Only the English-language credits and the artwork separate this from the Japanese version that has been available on import in specialist shops for many years. The most important difference is in the pricing, the import was well worth the £25 price, but now it's on offer for less than half that. Hopefully sales will be impressive enough to warrant a much larger portfolio of releases from Demon Records; there are innumerable anime tie-in CDs, and with some great potential. It would be particularly impressive to see Demon releasing cut-price CDs of non-MEL anime, such as **Urotsukidoji** or **Hummingbirds**, or perhaps even a compilation album of some of the best theme tunes, but only time, and sales, will tell. I suspect the chances are rather slim, because even the sleeve notes reflect a disappointingly partisan

stance, not only leaping backwards through hoops in order to avoid mentioning the word 'anime', but also implying that Manga Entertainment produced the cartoon themselves.



AKIRA

Composed & conducted by Shoji Yamashiro DSCD6

For those confused by the apparent availability of two original soundtracks, this is the one known in Japan as **Akira Symphonic**. This

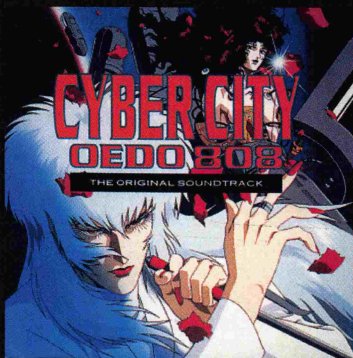
replays Shoji Yamashiro's excellent score, without the voices and sound effects. **Akira** is thoroughly deserving of these two variants on the original soundtrack, since in my experience, those who buy the 'symphonic' version express an interest in hearing the soundbites too, while those who buy the 'soundbite' version end up wishing they could also own a copy of the music in its unadulterated form. Instead of only four mega-tracks, the 'symphonic' version has ten smaller ones, which make it a lot easier for listeners to home in on their particular favourites. Equally as good as the 'original soundtrack' for completely different reasons, I cannot recommend either one over the other. It's all a matter of personal taste, and if you were moved to buy them both, you wouldn't be the first!



MEGAZONE 23 III

Various Artists DSCD9

This contains the incidental music from the MEL release of the same name, and as such is nothing much to write home about. However, **Megazone 23** has an extremely important distinguishing feature: a whopping 12-minute 'side story' in the original Japanese. This is possibly a little disappointing for non-linguists, since there is little chance of them ever finding out what is going on in the soundbites, so the absence of some form of explanation in the sleeve notes is a little annoying. For any of the die-hard dubbers who concede that the voice acting in **Akira** is rather good, there is a surprise in the cast list, which reveals that the voice actors for **Akira's** Kaneda, Tetsuo and Kaori all had roles in the original **Megazone**, although they were replaced with MEL's dub squad in the British version. Along with their plans to release some anime in subbed versions, this could be a watershed decision for MEL, and do their reputation a lot of good in fan circles. But where are the liner notes? Twelve minutes of Japanese chatter isn't going to mean much to 99.9% of the Mangatykes, and it would be a bitter irony if MEL's beer-and-curry market felt conned by purchasing what is actually an extremely faithful reproduction of the original.



CYBER CITY OEDO 808

Composed, Performed, Recorded & Produced by Rory McFarlane

A similar style to the *Akira* CD, mixing soundbites in with the soundtrack, this represents another new direction for MEL. Many of their staff were apprenticed in the music business, and this project seems to have given them the chance to remember the good old days. There is a disappointment in the *Cyber City* release, but it is informational rather than qualitative. The sleeve notes proudly proclaim that this is the 'original soundtrack', and while it may be the original soundtrack of the UK release, it bears little resemblance to the Japanese version. Instead it consists of new material written by Rory McFarlane.

McFarlane's bombastic rock riffs are the same kind of thing we've heard in MEL releases of *Guyver*, *Legend of the 4 Kings* and *Tank Police*, but *Cyber City* reveals a new side to him. Some of the tracks are rather good, and compare quite favourably with the Japanese originals. Perhaps the best example is the closing elegy, which reprises the opening titles, but on a quiet, tasteful piano. In other tracks McFarlane moves from ambient to metal and back again, and the CD has been knitted into a coherent whole by former mixmaster Laurence Guinness, now Head of Production at MEL. McFarlane is clearly very talented, but when all a client demands from an artist is heavy metal elevator music, that's all they'll get. If you liked the music in the UK version of *Cyber City*, then this is for you.

The ongoing controversy about MEL's policy towards their source material has, unfortunately, moved attention away from the music itself, and concentrates instead on where it is put. I went and listened to the original (ie. Japanese) soundtrack and found it rather naff in an 80s session-musician kind of way. But then again, McFarlane's opening theme, with the silly voice gargling the titles, is only 'better' in that it sounds more like the work of a 90s session musician. The question is, if you rewrite the soundtrack, does it count as a 'translation', or are you committing an unforgiveable error? Dubbing companies replace the voice track, and indeed, AnimEigo

even replaced the effects track on one of their releases. Would anyone have really minded if the embarrassing *Please Please Kiss Kiss* had been dropped from the *Tokyo Babylon* soundtrack and replaced with something a little more tolerable? I personally would like to see the Japanese soundtracks as untouched as possible, but I also concede that with the release of these titles, MEL have helped encourage a business line in CDs, and that that in itself will increase my chances of being able to buy, and hear more of the Japanese originals. Although I may not like *Cyber City* very much, its release also suggests that MEL will be releasing some 'genuine originals' too, such as the final CD for review this month.



MACROSS PLUS

Composed & Arranged by Yoko Kanno DSCD12

Fans should remember that this does not equate with the Sharon Apple *Cream Puff* album, which means a couple of the tracks you might expect are not present. Perhaps the most noticeable absence from this OST is the eerie *Ah Sai En* used in the teaser ads at the close of each episode, but plenty still remains to keep fans happy.

Voices crops up all over *Macross Plus*. Yoko Kanno sings it unaccompanied in the opening scene, a piano reprises it before segueing into *Myung's Theme*, and even *Ah Sai En* sounds like a very alien, yet still recognisable variation on the original melody. It is a truly beautiful song, and the chance to see the Japanese lyric sheet with the CD throws new light on the rhyming translation used in the MEL release. At first glance, the English lyrics might appear to be rather free and easy with the original song, but Raymond Garcia, who worked miracles on *Ninja Scroll* and *Orguss 02*, has once again pulled an impossible translation out of his hat. In the original Japanese, *Voices* is a 'counting-song', almost a nursery rhyme with an overall meaning that builds itself in steps with each numbered verse. But only the first verse appears at the opening of episode one, so rather than translate it faithfully and leave it virtually meaningless, Garcia has 'versioned' a song that captures the spirit of the

whole, encapsulated into a single stanza. Except for the *Akira* soundtracks, besides which almost anything would compare unfavourably, the *Macross Plus* soundtrack has to be the best buy in the current Demon line.

So, all in all, a mixed bag, but one which contains some striking surprises. The *Akira* soundtracks are both bargains, and both *Macross Plus* and *Megazone 23* are groundbreaking releases insofar as they reproduce the Japanese originals. *Cyber City Oedo*, in trying to reproduce the effects of the *Akira* soundtrack, without the components to match it, is something of a disappointment, but you can't have everything. Let's hope that these are but the first in a long line of anime tie-ins, but also for a few general improvements in presentation. Let's have liner notes for the Japanese tracks, a few non-MEL titles, and a bit more honesty over exactly what we're buying and no-one will complain.

DEMON RECORDS LIMITED
BRENTFORD
MIDDLESEX
TW8 9HF



All the CD's feature punchy picture discs except *MACROSS PLUS* which sadly opts for a rather dull typographical approach.



GHOST IN THE SHELL

攻殻機動隊

UPDATE

THE SENIOR CREATIVE TEAM

MASAMUNE SHIROW, manga creator. He was born on November 23rd, 1961, in Kobe, where he still lives. He started out as a dojinshi artist and his first work, BLACK MAGIC M-66, appeared while he was teaching in high school. He made his professional debut with APPLESEED in 1985; in 1987 he entered the anime world when he directed and wrote the screenplay for an OAV loosely based on BLACK MAGIC M-66. His other manga include DOMINION and ORION. DOMINION and APPLESEED have also appeared in anime form, though their creator was not directly involved with these projects. Shirow's manga is known in the West through several excellent translations into English, Italian and French.

MAMORU OSHII, director and storyboards. Born on August 8th 1951 in Tokyo, he has worked with such distinguished production houses as Tatsunoko and Studio Pierrot, making his directorial debut in 1983 with URUSEI YATSURA - ONLY YOU. His vast range of work includes the UY TV series (1981-86), the UY movies ONLY YOU and BEAUTIFUL DREAMER (1984), and the first six PATLABOR OAVs (1988) and both movies (1989 and 1993).

KAZUNORI ITO, screenplay. This distinguished screenwriter was born

on December 24th 1954 in Tokyo. He too made his debut on the UY TV series, and his other work includes MAGICAL ANGEL CREAMY MAMI., episodes 1-8 of MAISON IKKOKU, the first six PATLABOR OAVs and both PATLABOR films. His most recent work apart from GHOST IN THE SHELL was HIROHITO GAMERA (1995).

TOSHIHIKO NISHIKUBO, anime director. He was born in Tokyo on January 15th 1953 and has worked on shows ranging from CHRONICLE OF HEAVENLY SPHERE SHURATO and RED PHOTON ZILLION to VIDEO GIRL AI and CAMPUS GARDRESS. His talents also extend in other directions; he shared a joint directing credit with Oshii on PATLABOR 2 THE MOVIE.

HIROYUKI OKIURA, chara design & key animator. An Osaka man, born on October 18th 1966, he worked on the preliminary sketches for AKIRA before graduating to become character designer on the 1989 film RUN, MELOS! After working with Otomo again on preliminary drawings for ROUJIN Z, he was dragged into Nishikubo's crew for the ZILLION series as key animator. At present he's doing preliminary sketch work for Otomo's MEMORIES.

KAZUCHIKA KISE, key animator Also born in Osaka on August 6th 1965, he has worked on many TV series, but his theatrical debut was on PATLABOR THE MOVIE. His other credits include WEATHERING CONTINENT and HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN 1 & 2. He worked with Oshii on PATLABOR 2 THE MOVIE, and his most recent TV work was as chara designer and key animator on BLUE SEED.

KENJI KAWAI, music. Born on April 23rd 1957, his musical career has included the score for DEVIL-MAN THE BIRTH (1987), PATLABOR OAVs 1-6, PATLABOR 2 THE

MOVIE and SD GUNDAM OAV episodes. One of his biggest hits was the IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLER OAV score, in 1993; his most recent work is the music for the 1995 TV series BLUE SEED.

Many other distinguished talents have contributed to GHOST IN THE SHELL, among them renowned mecha designer Shoji Kawamori and gun adviser Kikuo Irimoto. He has worked on TV shows and live action films like VIOLENT COP and SONATINE, and it's his job to make sure the animators and director get the portrayal and use of guns in the film dead right.

CAST & THEIR CHARACTERS

ATSUKO TANAKA - Major Motoko Kusanagi. She was born on November 14th 1962 and has taken part in the dubbing of many foreign language movies. Her roles have included Annette in PATRIOT GAMES and Karen in UNLAWFUL ENTRY. She also played a leading role, again named Karen, in the LUPIN III TV special ORDER TO ASSASINATE LUPIN. Kusanagi, the leader of the Shell platoon, is a tough cop with a brain as sharp as her cyborg body is sleek; sometimes described as a bitch, she's a very powerful woman.

AKIO OTSUKA - Batou. Born on November 24th 1959, his distinguished dubbing career has included the role of Rhett Butler in the Japanese release of GONE WITH THE WIND. In the anime field he played Nemo in the TV series SECRET OF BLUE WATER (aka NADIA OF THE MYSTERIOUS SEAS) and Papa in THE MOOMINS; he also voiced Osamu Tezuka's medical antihero in BLACK JACK. His character, Batou, is Kusanagi's second-in-command and a real tough guy, but inside that hard-boiled exterior there's a soft heart.

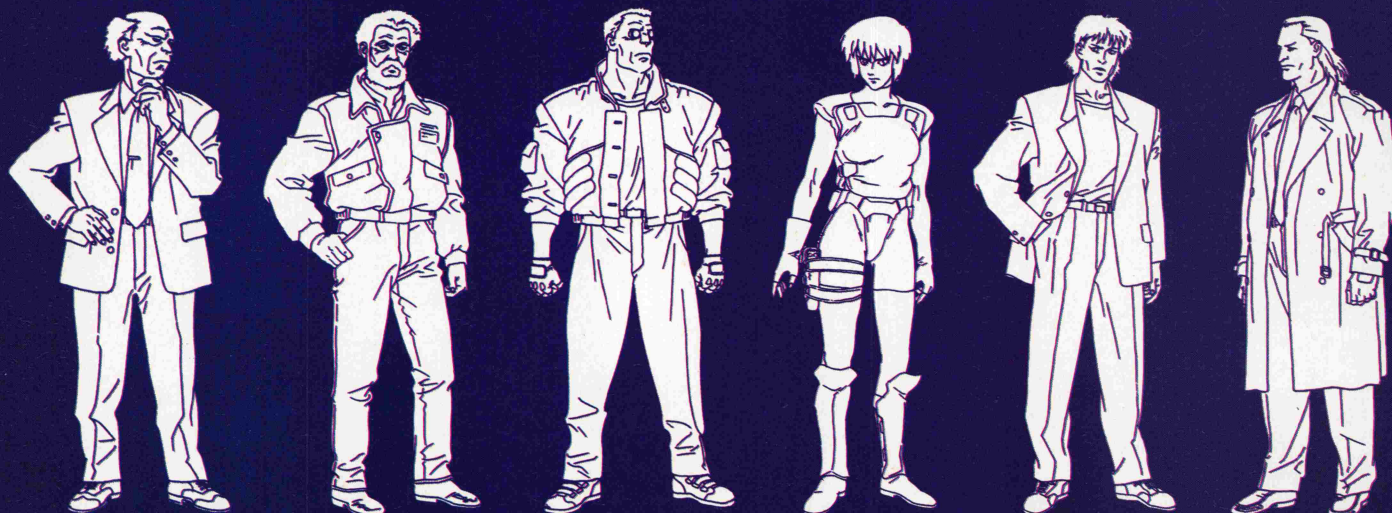
IEMASA KAYUMI - Puppet

Master. The voice of this 'virtual angel' was born on October 31st. He's no stranger to anime, having played roles ranging from Lepka in FUTURE BOY CONAN to Rebero in LEGEND OF GALACTIC HEROES and Kurotawa in NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND. The Puppet Master is the world's #1 computer criminal, & the true identity of this superhacker is unknown. Even his age & sex are mysteries; the only certain fact is that his home country was America.

TAMIO OHKI - Aramaki. He was born on January 2nd, 1928, and among his live action work is the Japanese voice of the Commander in POLICE ACADEMY. In the anime field he played Wort in RECORD OF LODOSS WAR, Robos in LEGEND OF GALACTIC HEROES, and Aroa's father in the TV series A DOG OF FLANDERS. Aramaki works in Division 9 and is described as 'a loyal worker for the Shell group and a kind of father figure to them'. He is trusted and respected by all the team members.

YUTAKA NAKANO - Ishikawa. Born on January 10th 1951, his dubbing work has mainly been in the live-action field and has included TERMINATOR 2, DARKMAN and ROBOCOP 3. Ishikawa is the strong, silent member of the Shell team, a bit of a lone wolf. If he has a vanity, it's his beard, which girls find really cute.

KOICHI YAMADERA - Togusa. The seiyuu born on June 17th 1961 is famous in Japan as Marty McFly in BACK TO THE FUTURE. He's also been associated with Disney, playing the voice of Donald Duck in the TV series DISNEY WORKS and the Beast in the theatrical release of BEAUTY AND THE BEATS. Togusa may possibly be a Japanese American, but this is never gone into in depth in the story. He has extensive cyberparts and is described as being 'computerised'.



ARAMAKI

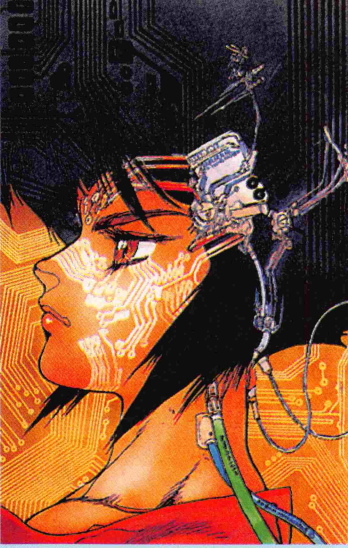
ISHIKAWA

BATOU

MOTOKO KUSANAGI

TOGUSA

PUPPET MASTER



PETER EVANS of Sakura Studio was at the afureco* for GHOST IN THE SHELL

*An "afureco" (after recording) event is often held for major titles; these can be invitation - only affairs for the Press or open to the public by ticket. Some feature games and songs, but all have interviews and appearances by cast and crew members

July 28, 1995 was the first day of the after recording for the movie KOUKAKU KIDOUTAI (Ghost in the Shell). Since this is going to be an 80 minute movie with Dolby sound, the recording took three days. The press interview with director Mamoru Oshii and the major voice actors took place on the first day at Mit Studio, Tammachi. Mit Studio is not a normal after recording studio, it's a studio for recording music. However, the movie staff wanted to use digital equipment not normally used for animation voices on the voicetrack.

The major voice actors are :

MOTOKO KUSANAGI Atsuko Tanaka
BATOU Akio Otsuka
PUPPET MASTER Iemasa Kayumi
ARAMAKI Tamio Ohki
ISHIKAWA Yutaka Nakano
TOGUSA Kouichi Yamadera
 (He wasn't present at the interview.)

Most of these voice actors mainly do dubs of foreign movies, instead of animation.

THE QUESTIONS

Q Was there any difficulty for the casting for this movie?

Oshii I wanted 'new voices' for my main characters; yet I also wanted veterans, to make the movie good. I listed to many voices, including those of non-seiyuu, but I quickly decided on Atsuko Tanaka. This is the first time I've worked with her.

The hardest decision of all was the Puppet Master's voice. Since the Puppet Master doesn't have a 'body' as such, his voice must have the power of existence. It must be the voice of a god, and a devil. This is the first time I've worked with Iemasa Kayumi too.

Q Any comments going into the recording?

Tanaka It has been over half a year since the audition. I had built up an image of the character, and when I saw the anime pictures for the first time yesterday, I also talked to the director about the character. It was very different from what I had imagined!

Kayumi I thought this year was going to be a simple year doing my regular work. Then this thing pops

up! My character is like a god-devil. There is no body. This is hard to do! I had no idea what to do. I came to the studio and talked to various people, and I'm getting it now. I'm feeling a lot of pressure.

Otsuka This [job] isn't going to be for others. This is a challenge for me, to see how I can get myself into the 'Oshii world'.

Ohki I just saw my character moving once, so I have to study the script and the tape some more. But it is matching the image that I had. I think I can do it.

Nakano This is the first time that I've done animation. I have done lots of movies and stage plays. I received the sketches and the script, I read the script, and it was very difficult. I saw the pictures today, and I finally understand what I have to do.

Q This anime is aimed at the world-wide market instead of just Japan. Is there anything different that you have to do?

Oshii With the characters and story, we are not doing anything different. When the dialogue becomes English, I'm worried about losing nuances. But I'll work with the English director and try to make it as good as possible. For the other parts, I'm not doing anything different for a world-wide release. There is going to be an English mix, so in that sense we are working twice as much. The voices will be taken [recorded] here, and we will send it over. We want to do it as close as possible to the voices here.

Q There is a lot of digital processing being used in this movie. Can you tell us any-

thing about it?

Oshii This is not an after recording studio, it's a music studio. More than half of the conversation is not normal. It takes place inside the body, and such. We are doing hard disk recording and digitizing the sound as it is being recorded. I think it's the first time this has been done in animation.

Q [To Iemasa Kayumi] Do you have to act any differently knowing that there will be a lot of high technology processing done to your voice?

Kayumi They may do a lot of processing, but I don't think they will change the voice so much that it will be too different. In any case, with so much mecha and sound effects involved, we will have to do the voices as well as possible so our voices don't get lost! so I am not thinking about those parts so much; I just want to do it in the usual way.

Oshii We will do a lot of processing, but it will not be like filters and such to change the voices. Right now, I'm thinking about adding effects that will be heard when listening with headphones.

The GHOST IN THE SHELL movie premiered at the Tokyo Fantastic Film Festival on 23rd September, along with the movie edit of MACROSS PLUS

Pictures ©Bandai Visual. Photos © Peter Evans/Sakura Studio. Translation by Hitoshi Doi. English text © Sakura Studio, August 1995



Star: ATSUKO TANAKA and Director: MAMORU OSHII

Centre back row: IEMASA KAYUMI - Puppet Master Middle four front row (Left to right): TAMIO OHKI - Aramaki, AKIO OTSUKA - Batou, ATSUKO TANAKA - Kusanagi Motoko, YUTAKA NAKANO - Ishikawa, together with other cast members



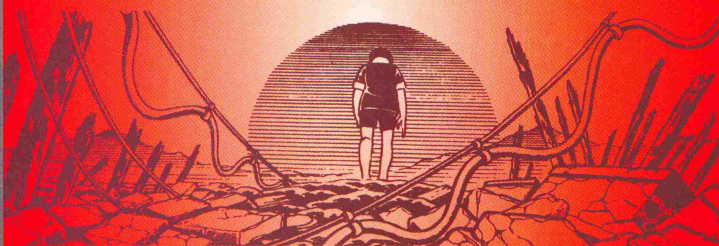
8.15a.m. 6TH AUGUST
1945 OUR WORLD
CHANGED FOREVER...



Keiji Nakazawa was six years old when his world was burned and blasted apart at 8.15 a.m. on 6th August 1945. His father, sister and brother all died, but he survived both the bombing itself and the terrible years that followed. When he grew up he became an artist, and has devoted much of his creative life to telling a generation which has never known the horrors of nuclear war why it must never be permitted to occur again, using the directness, simplicity and accessibility of the comic medium.

BAREFOOT GEN (its Japanese title is HADASHI NO GEN) is a fictionalised account of the aftermath of Hiroshima only to the extent that Nakazawa tells his story through the eyes of Gen Nakaoka, an elementary school student in similar circumstances to his own. His other work devoted to Hiroshima, I SAW IT (ORE WA MITA), is a 'straight' eyewitness account, telling how what he saw made him an anti-war cartoonist. It appeared in 1972, the year before GEN began its serialised run, in Bessatsu Shonen Jump, and was published in translation in the USA in 1983 by Educomics. Since 1976, BAREFOOT GEN has been the subject of a co-operative venture by Japanese and American volunteers, who include renowned Western translators such as Frederik L. Schodt and Jared Cook. Project Gen's aim is to raise funds to translate the manga and distribute it to schoolchildren throughout the world. The manga itself totals well over 2,000 pages and has been published in a number of formats including a seven volume set; volumes 1 and 2 have been published

BAREFOOT GEN



by
HELEN MCCARTHY

in English, and other editions include German, Tagalog and Esperanto. The manga has also inspired three live action films, an opera, and the animated film which has just been released by Streamline Pictures on the Orion Home Video label.

This was a brave release, timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; but BAREFOOT GEN is neither jingoistic nor apologist. It makes no accusations and lays no blame, apart from a sequence in which Gen's father rages at the folly of the Japanese government for continuing a war it cannot win, and the heartrending moment when Gen's mother is told of Japan's surrender as she collects the bones of her husband and children, just nine days after the Hiroshima bombing, and screams "Why now?" BAREFOOT GEN points no fingers; it simply presents facts, using a detached voiceover for the historical data - the force of the explosion, the number killed, the Japanese government's delay in surrendering - and the pictures and voices conjured by Nakazawa's manga to show how one child, his family and his community were battered but not broken by the terrors they endured.

In the manga, Gen's family are presented as opposed to the war, and suffer ostracism and police harassment as a result, but in the anime, with far less time to make its point, this is only touched on lightly, in a scene where neighbours show up to see a young man off to war and march down the street singing militaristic anthems while Gen, his



...43 seconds later, 1800 feet over Hiroshima, the atomic bomb named "Little Boy" exploded with a white-hot light, it was as if a million flash bulbs had gone off at once...

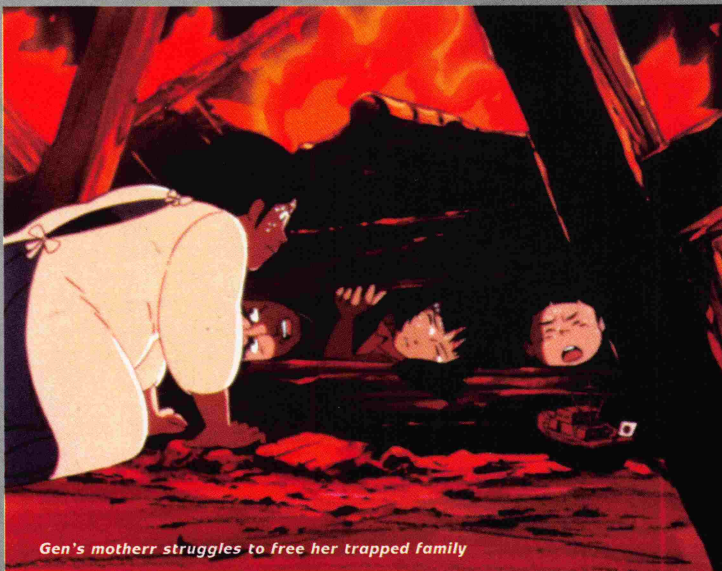
father and brother struggle past them pushing a cart, trying to earn enough money to buy a little of the increasingly scarce food supply. The Nakaoka family is lovingly portrayed, and it's easy to see where Gen gets his courage, cheerfulness and indomitable spirit. The childrens' resilience is what makes the film an ultimately cheering and rewarding experience.

The horrors of that time are there too; the human reactions of selfishness, fear, squeamishness, greed, and madness march with the physical horror of maggot-infested wounds, starvation, melting flesh and rotting corpses. There's more than enough torture and terror to compete with any tentacle fantasy so far released in the West, with the added awfulness that all of this

actually happened. Yet time and again the film comes down on the side of the positive, showing a mother driven half mad by the death of her baby, at first raging at Gen's mother that his newborn sister is better off dead, then breaking down in tears and giving the child her own milk, a crusty old monk at first yelling at the boys for stealing fish to feed their starving mother, then visiting with food from the temple, a neighbour saving some of his own rice for the family, an embittered survivor won over by the childrens' courage to try living again as best he can.

The theme of the film is that life will struggle for survival, whatever the odds. The unmistakable warning, however, is that if we weight the odds too heavily, one day life

*LIKE A WIND FROM HELL,
THE ATOMIC CLOUD ROARED UP SIX MILES INTO THE SKY OVER HIROSHIMA...*



Gen's mother struggles to free her trapped family



"THE PEOPLE LOOK LIKE MONSTERS!"



Hope reborn: At the end of the film, Gen keeps his promise to his dead brother and launches the toy boat he made for him

may lose the struggle. The corn that is growing in the fields at the beginning of the film, and burns like everything else when the blast hits, has sent its seed into the ground and springs again the next year. The children who saw people melting in the streets, their parents dying in burning houses, the river black with shed human skin, lived through it and built a new country. Japan has survived, not just as one of the world's great economic powers but as an Asian state striving to bridge the once yawning gap between East and West.

Mankind got lucky. 1945 was not, after all, the end of the world; but once the nuclear demon was out of its box, it couldn't be stuffed back inside. And if the one small bomb dropped on Hiroshima could do everything reported in eyewitness accounts, what could today's weapons 'achieve'? Artists like Nakazawa and humanists like the Project Gen volunteers have been struggling for decades to convince the world that there must be no more Hiroshimas. The release of this film in the West marks another small step down the road to understanding the realities of nuclear war. It deserves a wider western release, right across Europe and Scandinavia as well as the USA and Canada, but at least those with access to an NTSC playback vcr can now see one of the most poignant accounts of a terrible chapter in our history.



Orion Home Video/Streamline Pictures, 91423-TS, 80 mins, unrated, English dubbed.

Director:

Mamoru Shinzaki

Original Story, Producer, and Script:

Keiji Nakazawa

Chara design & drawing Director:

Kazuo Tomisawa

Art Director:

Kazuo Ogo

Director of Photography:

Kenichi Ishikawa

Music:

Kentarō Hada

Production co-operation:

Madhouse

English language version adapted, directed and produced by

Carl Macek; story editor

Fred Patten.

Based on the manga BAREFOOT GEN by Keiji Nakazawa, first published 1973 onwards in Shonen Jump magazine and various other publications.

Excerpts from BAREFOOT GEN (translated by PROJECT GEN) taken from Frederik L. Schodt's MANGA! MANGA! published by Kodansha

ONCE UPON A TIME REVISITED

by
CHRIS K. JACKMAN

BACKGROUND

'ONCE UPON A TIME' is an American, English language, version of a 1986 Japanese OVA called WINDARIA directed by Kunohiko Yuyama.

The story involves three distinct human civilisations. King Draco rules a corrupt and polluted industrial region known as the Shadowlands, situated in a gloomy mountain-range. By comparison the land of Lunaria is a peaceful and pleasant coastal market town ruled by a stern Queen whose daughter, Veronica, is more concerned with a relationship with King Draco's son Roland than the politics of her country. Situated between these two powerful lands is the peaceful valley farming community of Wandaerea. A huge tree, known as the 'Tree of Life', acts as a source of spiritual fulfilment and meeting place for important Valley affairs. Among the inhabitants are the athletic Alan and his charming wife Marie who make a living by selling vegetables at the market in Lunaria.

Lunaria lies on the shores of a great lake and controls the flow of water, with huge flood gates and aqueducts, which runs into a river supplying water to Wandaerea and ultimately the Shadowlands. The Shadowlands and Lunaria had signed a treaty promising not to invade one another's land, but King Draco is becoming restless since the Lunarians have begun restricting the supply of water. Between Wandaerea and the Shadowlands the river runs through a dark foreboding forest known as The Haunted Woods. It is home to horrific phantoms that reflect and prey on the dark side of travellers' hearts. However, Roland and Veronica send frequent secret messages via carrier pigeon and meet in the Haunted Woods.

An enormous silver 'spacecraft' known as the 'ghost-ship' patrols the land, collecting the spirits of the dead who fly to it in the form of glowing red Swallow birds.



ウインドアリア

WINDARIA



MAIN CHARACTERS

ALAN

A blond haired athletic young valley farmer who unintentionally gets caught up in the war in his efforts to protect his home of Wandaerea.

MARIE

Alan's auburn haired, loving, wife. Has a small pet 'squirrel' called Chipper. She is honest and faithful.

KING DRACO

The once powerful King of the Shadowlands, which is now a polluted industrial nightmare. His people are discontented. Although his army is well equipped with guns and tanks, his soldiers are a drunken, inept rabble.

PRINCE ROLAND

The dashing, raven haired Prince of the Shadowlands, he is dominated by his father to become commander of the Royal army. He would rather spend his time with Princess Veronica.

QUEEN OF LUNARIA

A stern ruler, whose country has never been to war. Her soldiers have high morale, but lack the sophisticated weapons of the Shadowlands.

PRINCESS VERONICA

The beautiful, dark haired Princess of Lunaria and Roland's lover. She is very strong willed and unconcerned with the politics of her country.

KAILEF

The aging and sleepy Lunarian sea-gate keeper

JULIETTE

A Wandaean villager who lives in limbo, wandering the land, wanting to die but unable to do so until she is reunited with her love, who left and never returned.

SYNOPSIS

It is a bright and sunny day. Marie and Alan take a small cart of vegetables to sell in Lunaria. As Alan is enthusiastically selling his produce Princess Veronica is seen running on the walls above the marketplace - about to swim in the lake. The people remark on her beauty. A nervous Shadowlands spy sneaks past the sleeping floodgate keeper, Kailef, and opens the huge flood gates in an attempt to increase the supply of water to the Shadowlands. In his haste the gates are opened to wide, causing a raging torrent of water that begins to flood the marketplace.

Alan sees his chance to avoid disaster and manages to close the gates. As the bumbling spy makes his escape on the city walls Princess Veronica tackles him, and he is taken before the Queen of Lunaria. Her ministers are sure that the Sha-

dowlanders intend to invade Lunaria and advise the preparation of an army. The Queen begins to worry about the consequences of her daughters rumoured relationship with King Draco's son.

The spy is sent back to King Draco with a message that the flow of water from Lunaria will be stopped until a payment is received. Outraged, Draco prepares for an invasion of Lunaria.

Roland and Veronica meet secretly in the Haunted Wood where they promise not to take part in any invasion.

The villagers of Wandaerea gather under the Tree of Life to discuss the defence of their valley in the event of war. As Alan and Marie return home Alan notices a man signalling to him with a light on a nearby hill. Marie continues home alone after Alan makes an excuse to investigate the mysterious character. The man introduces himself as an envoy from King Draco, saying that he had heard of how Alan had saved Lunaria from flooding and asks him to become a neutral messenger between Lunaria and the Shadowlands. Alan agrees and is given a 'hover-bike' for that purpose.

Returning home on his newly acquired toy, Alan explains to Marie that he must leave for the Shadowlands that night to see the King. Saddened at his departure Marie gives her love a knife for protection and vows to wait for his return. Alan promises he will return as soon as possible.

Lunaria prepares its soldiers for a surprise attack on the Shadowlands. Veronica tells her mother that she wants to marry Roland in order to unite the two nations and avoid war, but the Queen will not be swayed from her current course of action. A Lunarian 'battle balloon' clashes with Shadowland aircraft just outside Wandaerea. The villagers of Wandaerea leave the valley to avoid the fighting that will soon occur. Only Marie remains to wait for Alan's return.

A lone surviving Shadowland plane returns from the recent skirmish to inform King Draco that Lunaria is prepared for combat. Roland tries in vain to convince his father to stop the war. In a fit of anger the King draws a knife. He struggles with his son, calling him a traitor if he will not lead an invasion force. Draco is accidentally killed by his own knife. As a result Roland is forced, as heir to the throne, to swear an oath to lead his country into war.

Veronica is shocked to learn that Roland has broken his promise not to fight and is leading an army to attack her homeland. She decides to



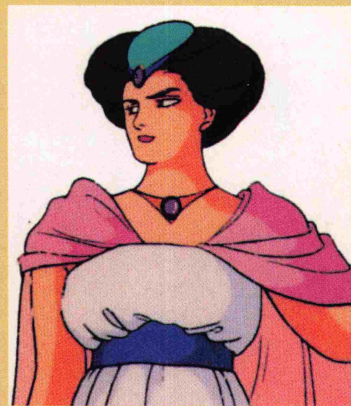
ALAN (ISU)



KING DRACO (KING LANSLO)



MARIE & CHIPPER (MARLIN & POLIPOLI)



QUEEN OF LUNARIA (GUINEVERE)



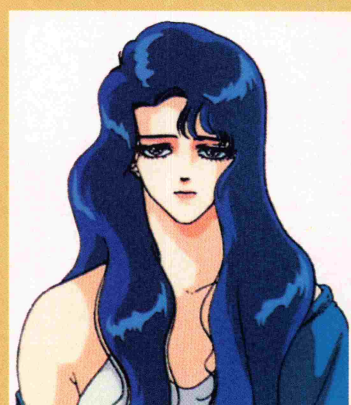
PRINCESS VERONICA (AHANAS)



KAILEF (PIRALU)



PRINCE ROLAND (JILL)



JULIETTE / JANNA (DRUID)

command the Lunarian army herself after her mother falls ill.

By now Alan has entered the Shadowland palace and is promised riches if he undertakes a mission to flood Lunaria that will save his home of Wandaerea from destruction during the battle.

Roland leads his nervous men through the Haunted Woods. As they emerge in Wandaerea they confront the Lunarian army and the battle begins.

Alan arrives in Lunaria to find the city almost deserted. Hurrying to the gatehouse he tells Kailef that he is needed to fight and that he will guard the gates in his place. With the gatekeeper gone and the Lunarian army far away in Wandaerea, there is nothing to prevent Alan from completing his treacherous mission to flood Lunaria. Alan raises the flood gates which release the full force of the lake upon the city; its buildings and walls begin to crumble and collapse. The Lunarian citizens gather on the steps of the Palace. With no way to escape the rapidly rising water they can only look in horror at the destruction of their beautiful city and the fate that will soon befall them.

In Wandaerea the bloody battle continues, but with an apparent lack of tactics the fighting dissolves into every man for himself. A cannon shell falls way off its intended target and hits Marie's house as she is praying.

On the battlefield Veronica catches sight of Roland. She fires her pistol, narrowly missing Roland, and signals him to meet her, away from the battle, in the Haunted Woods. Roland and Veronica stand alone, oblivious to the carnage of the earlier fighting around them. Both feel betrayed by each other's broken promises not to fight, and realise that they are fighting their parents' war through promises made to lead their armies. With no future for their relationship Veronica takes her only course of action. She shoots Roland, then herself - at last they can be together forever.

Alan is given a small castle, and riches, on his return to the Shadowlands as payment for his successful mission. Living a life of parties and drink, Alan is seduced by the enchanting Celina. She is told to assassinate Alan, who now realises he had been used by the Shadowlands and makes his escape back to Wandaerea.

On the journey to his homeland Alan discovers the once majestic city of Lunaria now lying in ruins beneath the sea. As Alan looks on in shock he is startled by a large flock of 'Soul Birds' that fly from the ruined city towards him. The

appalling result of his mission chills him. Running in a blind panic, Alan finally reaches his partially destroyed house and is surprised to find Marie waiting. Overjoyed at his arrival Marie thanks Alan for keeping his promise to return. Ashamed at his recent undisclosed actions Alan promises he will not leave Marie again. As they embrace the haunting sound of the Ghost-Ship is heard. Tragically, Marie had been killed in the battle of Wandaerea but remained as a spirit bound by her sincere promise to wait for Alan. Marie transforms into a 'Soul-bird' and flies to meet the Ghost-Ship. Alan desperately tries to chase her but soon reaches the edge of the cliff high above the Lunarian lake and can merely watch as Marie flies out of sight. Realising he is not alone on the cliff, Alan turns to see Juliette sitting a few feet away from him. Juliette tells Alan she has learnt that in order to gain enlight-

extremely good artwork and animation, complemented by a rousing instrumental music score. There are many action scenes, but a larger part of the film is concerned with relationships between the characters. It's heartwarming in parts and desperately sad in others.

The English language version has undergone many alterations to present it to a juvenile audience, hence the uninspiring title of *ONCE UPON A TIME*. It also features simplified dialogue and added narration to explain what is happening. Background music has been moved around, quietened, withdrawn and even replaced with new music. Unfortunately, but not altogether surprisingly, the two original Japanese vocal tracks have been removed. The new music is in a similar style to the original, but adds more tension. The more violent scenes have been cut short as has a



enment, and join the Ghost-Ship, one must make the most of one's life. At this, Juliette turns to stone - presumably as penance for the undue lament of her lost love. Taking heed of Juliette's words, Alan slowly walks to the great Tree of Life. He lies on one of its huge roots lonely and crying, but promises to rebuild the lands he played a part in destroying.

ONCE UPON A TIME - CHANGES

ONCE UPON A TIME is a poignant and unique story concerning the tragedy of war and how it affects those involved, and includes strong romantic elements. It features

scene briefly showing Princess Veronica semi-naked in bed - this has been reinstated in the new Streamline release. However, there are still a surprising number of graphically violent scenes given its U certificate. The film's overall pace has been increased by editing. The slower pace of the original Japanese version creates a more serious tone and a sense of intrigue not found in *ONCE UPON A TIME*. This is heightened by the fact that the original story takes place over a period of months, whereas the same events in *ONCE UPON A TIME* occur within a matter of days.

The Japanese *WINDARIA* also has scenes that show the farming com-

munity of Wandaerea (Saki) in much more detail. If you've only seen the English dub you'd be forgiven for thinking Alan and Marie were the only people who lived or did any farming in Wandaerea. In fact a herd of Unicorns are shown residing in the surrounding fields too! Likewise life in Lunaria (Isa) is revealed more extensively in the Japanese version.

MORALITY

Alan of *ONCE UPON A TIME* is caught up in the events of the war and is more naive than his alter ego, Isu, from the original Japanese film. In the latter case, Isu (Alan) yearned to be a valley hero and live the life of the higher classes, although his friends dismiss these as foolish dreams. When Isu received his 'hover-bike' from the Paro (Shadowlands) envoy, he felt privileged that he was chosen as a messenger. Returning to his house Isu finds Polipoli (Chipper) the squirrel playing with a toy. Marlin (Marie) had been visited by a representative of Isa (Lunaria) who wanted Isu to help them fight against Paro while Isu was out. The toy was given to Polipoli by the representative as a gift, but Isu joined the side who offered the most valuable bribe - Paro. In *ONCE UPON A TIME* this point is lost since Marie says she made the gift for Chipper herself.

Isu's greed becomes so consuming that he accepts the mission to flood Isa for personal gain, which makes him no better than the Paro spy that had tried to flood Isa before the war. (Whereas in *ONCE UPON A TIME*'s version of the story Alan (Isu) undertakes this mission in order to save Wandaerea.)

Isu completes his mission and receives payment from Paro. The Queen of Paro, still melancholy three months after the death of her son Jill (Roland), begins to despise Isu's revelry and agrees to his assassination.

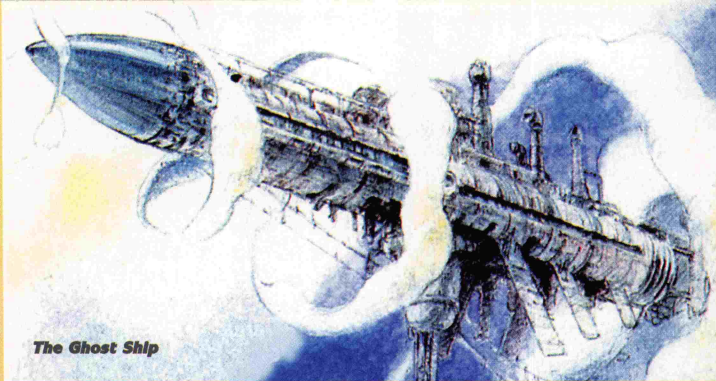
Jill and Ahanas (Veronica) would have wanted nothing more than to forsake their responsibilities and riches in order to live the simple but happy life that Isu and Marlin once had. All Marlin needed to be content was the love of Isu, whereas Isu foolishly felt the route to true happiness was through money and status.

Another theme of the film concerns the consequences of not having faith in promises. One of the original Japanese soundtrack songs is even titled 'YAKUSOKU' (Promise), but has been removed from the English dubbed film. Lunaria (Isa) and the Shadowlands (Paro) promise not to break their peace treaty. Roland (Jill) and Veronica (Ahanas) promise not to become involved in their parents' disputes. At the outbreak of war Alan (Isu)

promises to return a valley hero and Marie (Marlin) promises to wait for him. Additionally in the Japanese version Druid (Juliette), a woman of Saki (Wandaerea), had urged her love, Banbou, to become the Captain of the Ghost Ship as it paid more than farming. However as captain he had to make a vow that he would not see living women for ten years - when his period as captain ends. As Banbou's term progressed Druid missed him terribly and urged him to break his promise and return to her, but Banbou will not. Banbou knew the importance of keeping a promise although it meant the anguish of separation for himself and Druid. At the end of the film Druid finally understood the pain Banbou must have also been suffering. She turned herself to stone, even though there are only six months remaining until she could at last be reunited with Banbou. Seeing this Isu realised the heartache he had put Marlin through and went to the tree Windaria (Tree of Life) filled with loneliness and remorse. Here he made a final promise to become the captain of the Ghost-ship, once Banbou's term ended, then live with Marlin forever collecting the souls of those who had died in the war. This is a bleaker ending when compared to that of ONCE UPON A TIME.

In ONCE UPON A TIME Druid is portrayed as two separate characters, with all references to Banbou removed from the story. The first character is Janna who is said to have 'drunk Shadowlands water and was never the same'. Narration explains how Shadowlands water is toxic and drives people mad! She is, however, of little consequence to the overall plot. The second character is Juliette whose story is similar to Druids.

In general I prefer the original Japanese film as its story is more satisfying. ONCE UPON A TIME has many 'loose ends' due to alterations in the original story-line. This is evident in the Juliette/Janna example. Furthermore, at the beginning of both versions of the film there is a scene of a funeral pyre held in Wandaerea where the deceased person's spirit flies to the Ghost-Ship as a 'soul-bird'. The camera pans across the crowd of onlookers, among them are Alan and Marie. In the original film this is simply a funeral for a Saki (Wandaerea) villager. However, in ONCE UPON A TIME this is Alan's own funeral and his transformation to the Ghost Ship as he finally gains 'enlightenment'. Then Alan recounts, with narration, the story of his life. This change in the story is essential for the ending of ONCE UPON A TIME, even though he and Marie can be clearly seen in the crowd of mourners.



The Ghost Ship

JAPANESE LANGUAGE MERCHANDISE

'MESSAGE FROM THE MOON' (Tsuki no Koe, Hoshi no Yume) - features illustrations of characters by Mutsumi Inomata, including WINDARIA, LEDA and WEATHERING CONTINENT. 117 pages, mostly colour (roughly A4 size). A Dragon Magazine special from Fujimishobo, ISBN: 4-8291-9101-5 0076 2000 A more literal translation of the title is 'Moon of Voice, Dream of Stars'. £21.99 + P&P from the Sheffield Space Centre (who also stock a large variety of anime merchandise.) Send an SSAE for their current catalogue.

'WINDARIA MEDIAMIX SPECIAL', 113 pages (approx. half in colour), \$15 'WINDARIA MOVIE PROGRAM', 24 colour pages, \$6 Books Nippan USA may still stock these two books.

Another book to keep an eye out for is the 'WINDARIA ORIGINAL ANIME BEST SERIES FILM COMIC' which features the story told with pictures of the actual animation



cells. (A5 size) WINDARIA ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK ONGAKU-HEN (CD Music Compilation) Victor VDR-1242 (1986.7.21) 14 tracks, 42:54 A good place to try to order this is 'Laser Perceptions', 1739 Noriega Street, San Francisco, CA, 94122, USA.

Arai Akino provided the vocals for the two original Japanese WINDARIA songs. The track 'Utsukushii Hoshi' (Beautiful Star) is so haunting! You may like to know that Arai also sang on the soundtrack of Katsura Masakazu's superb (1992) romantic comedy 'VIDEO GIRL AI'.

The author acknowledges the valuable information provided by:

WINDARIA SYNOPSIS by Miyako Graham (featured in the 1988 Capricorn Anime Program) WINDARIA SYNOPSIS by James Matsuzaki (featured in The Anime Reference Guide). WINDARIA SCRIPT by Hiroshi Haga JAPANESE SEIYUU LIST compiled by Hitoshi Doi ANIME CD CYCLOPEDIA maintained by Stephen Pearl Fred Patten of Streamline Pictures

and John Andersen from Maine USA. The Sheffield Space Centre for their kind assistance.

STAFF SPEAK! by HELEN MCCARTHY

The WINDARIA movie programme contains interviews and comments from the senior staff plus background information about the film, which took more than a year and a half to make. It was evidently a happy set - art director Tohru Katsumata spoke appreciatively of the many excellent meals the crew enjoyed together!

Director Kunohiko Yuyama said that the story was 'combined from an essence of fairytales, myths and legends'. In Japan, from the earliest times, it was believed that spirits lived in trees, and even though this is not taken seriously in the modern world, there are places today - peaceful Buddhist shrines, large parks and woodlands - where people are able to sense their spiritual presence; so this ancient belief is not altogether forgotten. In creating the world known as Windaria, he wanted to convey a sense of this essential spiritual goodness of the plant kingdom. "The Tree of Windaria is peaceful, a return to the viridian days of rustic existence. We wanted to get some image of this glorious mythical scenery in our production, even though the atavistic sense of landscape is being lost."

Chara designer Mutsumi Inomata said "For me, WINDARIA is a theatrical production. When I think that the character designs I drew on the settei were magnified and then projected in a cinema, it makes me more than very happy; but it also makes me somewhat uneasy! I had to design old and young, male and female, all kinds of different characters - and not just their physical appearance; 'character' has more than one meaning!" She recalls that the flood scenes and the crowd scenes gave her particular trouble: "I soon got used to doing sketch after sketch after sketch, and by the time I had finished, I, like all the other honourable members of staff, was truly, truly exhausted! Now the world of Windaria is out of our hands and we must stand back and let it out into the world..."

The powerful, emotive music for the film was influenced by such famous Western film composers as Francis Ray, John Williams and Michel Legrand. "The music of a film is vital for conveying feelings in the darkness of the cinema. Film-makers and musicians must co-operate to create the right mood, and when you see a film, you must be filled with what you see - the music must permeate each moment." There can be no doubt that the music, pictures and story have combined to outstanding effect in WINDARIA.

UK ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION

ONCE UPON A TIME, © 1987
Harmony Gold USA Inc. & Idol Co.
Ltd.
(On the MY TV label), 96 mins, cert.
U

Unfortunately ONCE UPON A TIME has been out of circulation for a few years, but it can sometimes be found in the children's sections of 'bargain basement' video stores for around £2. At this price it is a bargain not to be missed! Some video libraries even rent it.

STAFF

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
Frank Agrama
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Jehan Agrama
DIALOGUE
Tom Weiner
DIRECTED & WRITTEN BY
Carl Macek
POST PRODUCTION
Intersound Inc.
POST PRODUCTION EXECUTIVE
Kent Harrison Hayes
POST PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR
Stephen Bradley
PRODUCTION MANAGER
Andrea Coppola
FOLEY
Ossama Khuluki
SOUND EFFECTS
George Bours
Koriki Matsuura
Yasuyuki Konno
MUSIC EDITING & FINAL MIX
George Bours
ADDITIONAL MUSIC
Jack Goga
Randall Ramage
MUSIC & SOUND
Gold Screen Inc.
PRODUCER
Ahmed Agrama

The Harmony Gold / Intersound Inc. production team of Carl Macek with

Jehan and Ahmed Agrama was responsible for the American cult sci-fi extravaganza ROBOTECH in 1985.

VOICE ACTORS

Ryan O` Flannigan
Jane Allen
Bruce Nielsen
Jeremy Platt
A. Gregory
Abe Lesser
Brittany Harlowe
Betty Gustafson
Catherine Lucani

ENGLISH VOICE ACTOR TRIVIA

I honestly think ONCE UPON A TIME has quite reasonable voice actors who put a lot of feeling into their roles. They sound very similar to the original Japanese cast, managing to reproduce the characters personalities very well.

You may be surprised to know that RYAN O` FLANNIGAN is also the voice behind the baddy `Goldar` in the popular, but controversial, American live action series `MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS`, which is shown now and again on ITV - GMTV. Another pair of ONCE UPON A TIME voice actors can be heard in ROBOTECH. A. GREGORY was one of the evil Robotech MASTERS in Southern Cross and BRITTANY HARLOWE provided the voice for CLAUDIA GRANT in the Macross Saga.

USA ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION

In 1992 Streamline Pictures released ONCE UPON A TIME in an unrated form with the original title WINDARIA. The only notable change to the Harmony Gold version is the restored nude scene involving Princess Veronica. In 1993

Streamline licensed this version to the 'Best Film & Video Corporation' label of North America, and it has just been re-released.

For a dubbed NTSC copy of WINDARIA try BOOKS NIPPAN mail order at \$29.95; (who also stock many more NTSC videos, CDs and books.) Contact them at: Books Nippan, 605 W.7th St., Los Angeles, CA 90017
email: nippan@netcom.com

ORIGINAL JAPANESE LANGUAGE VERSION

WINDARIA (Legend of Fabulous Battle) © 1986 Idol/Kaname Productions, 101 mins

STAFF

PLANNING & PRODUCTION
Syuichi Onodera
DIRECTOR
Kunohiko Yuyama
CHARA DESIGN & ANIMATION DIRECTOR
Mutsumi Inomata
MECHA DESIGN & IMAGE SETTING
Syohei Ohara
Takahiro Sumimasu
MUSIC
Satoshi Kadukura
ART DIRECTOR
Tohru Katsumata
SOUND EFFECTS
Katsumi Ito
ANIMATION
Kaname Productions
ANIMATION SUPERVISING PRODUCER
Keisuke Fujikawa

Director Kunohiko Yuyama went on to make the (1987) comic fantasy LEDA - ADVENTURES OF YOHKO. Mutsumi Inomata also provides beautiful character designs and art direction for LEDA. Among Mutsumi's other credits are original character designs for Kouichi Mashita's (1992) dark fantasy THE

WEATHERING CONTINENT, plus the adventure WATT POE. In my opinion Mutsumi's WINDARIA chara designs are her most stunning though.

Other anime released in Japan in 1986 were Hayao Miyazaki's adventure LAPUTA, Katsuhiko Nishijima's comic PROJECT A-KO and the first instalment of Hideki Kakinuma's space war GALL FORCE - ETERNAL STORY.

(The first Japanese cast, chara name is the English interpretation, the second is the Japanese Romaji translation.)

JAPANESE SEIYUU TRIVIA

TOHRU FURUYA (ISU) starred as Seiya from the mystical adventure SAINT SEIYA.

WAKA KANDA (MARLIN) played the impatient Bargy, captain of the Mars Force 'Plasma Shooter' in GALL-FORCE: EARTH CHAPTER (1991), with NAOKO MATSUI (AHANAS) as the heroic Soundy Newman of the Earth Force.

KAZUHIKO INOUE (JILL) played equally courageous Sakon from the period war, demonic adventure YOTODEN.

HIDEKATSU SHIBATA (KING LANSLO) played Maldora in the CRUSHER JOE TEAM.

ICHIROU NAGAI (PIRALU) - better known as the voice of Happosai, the perty knicker stealing letch of Rumiko Takahashi's RANMA 1/2.



CAST

JAPANESE CHARA NAME - ENGLISH CHARA NAME
ISU (Izuru) - Alan
MARLIIN (Maarin) - Marie
POLIPOLI - Chipper
DRUID(Doruido) - Juliette / Janna
TOREL (Toreru) - Bren (a Wandaerean villager)
KING LANSLO (Ransuro) - King Draco
JILL (Jiru) - Roland
CAIL - Lord Lagato (Shadowlands minister)
SHALEM (Sharemu) - Celina (Shadowlands citizen)
GUINEVERE(Ginembia) - Queen of Lunaria
AHANAS (Aanasu) - Veronica
KYLE (Kairu) - Lunarian Royal advisor
PIRALU (Piraaru) - Kailef
Saki - Wandaerea
Windaria (the tree of Saki) - The Tree of Life
Paro - Shadowlands
Isa - Lunaria
Forest of Doubts - The Haunted Woods



HARUHIKO MIKIMOTO

Q Did you have any art training before starting your career?

A No, nothing formal. Sometimes I wish I had had the opportunity to have studied art formally. In Japan, some of my colleagues are graduates of art schools and they have learned all the basics properly; so maybe I would have benefited.

Q How long have you been drawing?

A As a child I had no brothers and sisters, so drawing was my favourite pastime. I decided to make a living by drawing in my early 20s.

Q How did you first get involved in animation?

A There was a group of about 10 college buddies who weren't exactly going around to animation production companies, but they were going into companies making animation. I tagged along with them, and that was the start. I started to get introduced to people they knew in the industry and got some work.

Q What made you finally decide to make a living from your art?

A Well, even after I got involved in animation, I hadn't finally decided on doing that; but then I got quite a lot of work and dropped out of college, so that was how it started.

Q What would you have done if you hadn't been an artist?

A I'd probably be a salaryman!

Q What were you studying when you dropped out?

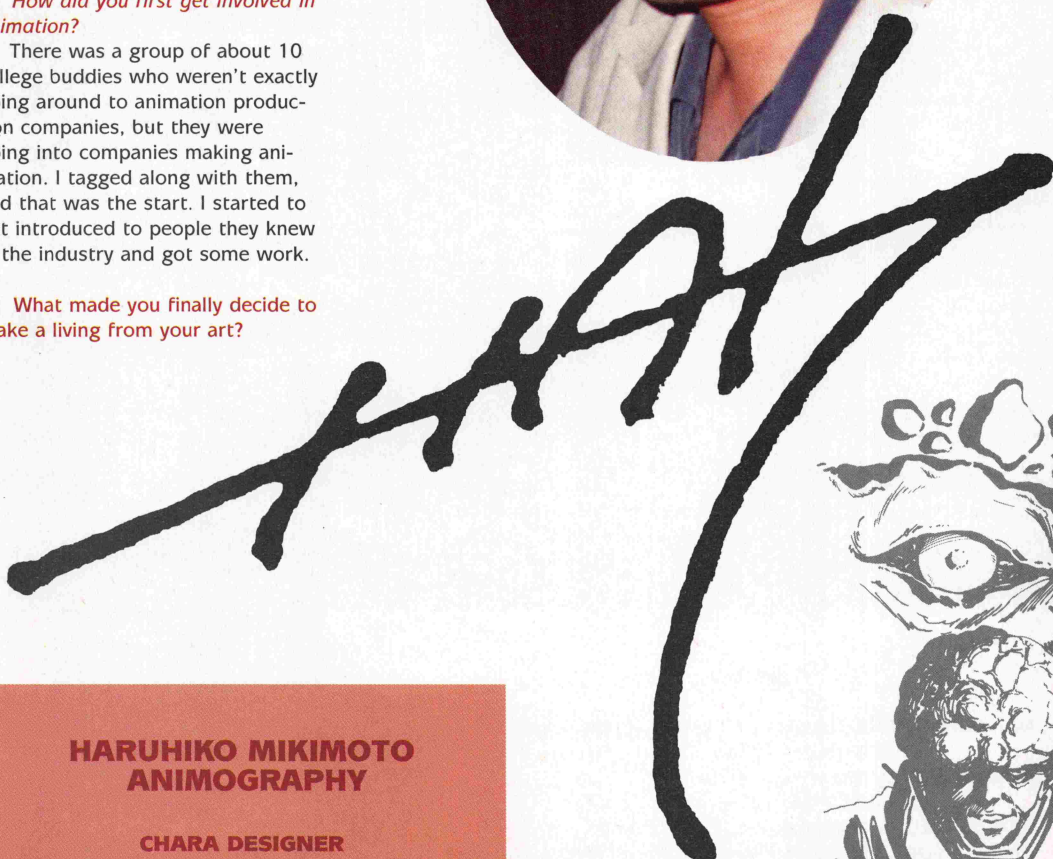
A I was studying engineering as a major, but I dropped out in the second year of college, before I really got into further specialisation.

Q Why did you drop out?

A I was working on animation design jobs and my grades were dropping. Specifically, if you are an engineering major you have to attend labs and you can't make up for them. Since I wasn't attending labs, my grades started to fall.

Q Well, we were very lucky in hindsight that you did drop out!

A (laughing) Maybe becoming a happy-go-lucky salaryman might have been easier!



HARUHIKO MIKIMOTO ANIMOGRAPHY

CHARA DESIGNER

Super Dimensional Fortress Macross
Macross the Movie (Do You Remember Love?)
Macross II
Macross 7
High Speed Jecy
Megazone 23 (Eve Tokimatsuri)
Aim for the Top! Gunbuster
Mobile Suit Gundam 0080 : War in the Pocket
Super Dimensional Century Orguss
Orguss 02
Salamander

MANGA ARTIST

Marionette Generation, NewType magazine

Above: MACROSS : DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE?

THE ANIME EXPO INTERVIEW

Mikimoto-sensei needs no introduction to his legion of fans; his is one of the most admired talents in anime. Helen McCarthy and Jim Swallow interviewed him over two sessions with a number of other anime and comics journalists at Anime Expo in July 1995.



Q *What's your favourite medium to paint in?*

A Well, the work I do doesn't really allow me to use this medium, but I really like using light watercolours. Science fiction and fantasy doesn't allow me to work like this, but I prefer to use lighter washes of colours, like Chinese ink work.

Q *It seems you're doing more watercolour work now. Is that because it's technically easier than, say, magic marker or pen and ink, or is it more expressive, or is it that you just enjoy it more?*

A Technically, yes, it's somewhat easier. However, what is easy technically is awkward in other ways - when something is simple you have to concentrate more because very subtle nuances are important in this kind of art. So I spend more time concentrating on getting it exactly right.

Q *Are you working on any new projects right now?*

A No animation projects at present. I have three projects for computer games, using animation within the

games, for several companies.

Q *What about manga projects?*

A Yes, I'm working on a manga for Kadokawa Shoten. It will be appearing in SHONEN ACE magazine later this year.

Q *Do you think the use of animation in games will develop further in the future?*

A Probably so, yes.

Q *How did you get involved in doing the demo reel for the Sega Saturn?*

A The game company approached me.

Q *How do you feel about the future of anime and games, as they relate to each other?*

A I think there'll be more synergy - the anime industry and the games industry will become closer and closer in future.

Q *Monkey Punch has talked about the future of manga on the CD-ROM format and how it might be possible to make CD-ROM comics. Have you*

been approached to work on any projects like this?

A Not for manga, but some of my illustration collections are coming out on CD-ROM.

Q *Did you ever think MACROSS could remain popular for so long?*

A Well, all of us on the staff back then had such high morale and enthusiasm that I knew the series would be a success in Japan. I never expected it to be so popular outside the country, though!

Q *Are you happy with MACROSS 7 and how your designs have appeared in the anime?*

A Oh yes. I think the show is blessed with a very good staff.

Q *What were your early influences from anime and manga?*

A I loved to watch GUNDAM, and I was very excited by the work of Yoshikazu Yasuhiko on that show. I was most influenced by the feeling that work gave me. I remember that feeling very strongly.

Q *Doing so many projects at once,*

you must get tired - how do you deal with bad days?

A Well, if I quit my current job I couldn't do anything else, so I never really thought about it; but to refresh myself I often go on a long road trip.

Q *Do you work too hard?*

A It seems like work always chases after me, but I'm a slow worker so perhaps that's unavoidable. Ideally, if all I needed to do was draw a few sketches a month and I could make a living like that, I'd be happy - but that might be difficult

Q *Apart from travelling, do you have any hobbies or other interests?*

A I like reading magazines, and I enjoy tinkering with my camera.

Q *Which aspect of your animation work do you like best - directing, designing or writing?*

A Well, I'm not involved in the whole process of production; but anime is a collaboration, where others contribute to your efforts, and that collaboration with others is the

Mimsy Lars From SUPER DIMENSION CENTURY ORGUSS



best part.

Q Do you have a dream project, something you'd love to work on?

A Basically, my style has always been to respond to others' requests, so I don't really have a dream project of my own right now, but I think I'm in a blessed position, where many of my demands are met, so in that sense I'm in a really happy environment.

Q Comparing personal illustration work to the collaborative work you do in anime, which do you prefer?

A I like my private illustration work best.

Q Is that because you have more control?

A In a team environment you have to make concessions for others, and that can be tough. Doing manga work, I have much younger staff around me and I have to make an effort to keep up with their conversations and interests, so that starts to get a little tough.

Q In MACROSS 7 Max and Miria are both much older. How did you approach the job of designing their older selves?

A I didn't really make any considerations as to how to age them, but I did want them to look like themselves - so quite apart from their ages, I spent a lot of effort in making them look like themselves.

Q How did you come up with the idea for Mirene and how was that related to the Max and Miria charas?

A I thought about what the show was like and I wanted to make her like the show - bright and cheerful.

Q We've been following MACROSS 7 and notice that there seem to be lots of different styles of character designs. For instance, some of the aliens seem to be almost Go Nagai-esque, and so on. Did you work with a large staff of designers, and which characters did you design?

A I basically provide the prototype artwork, and other animators modify it as appropriate. I have nothing to do with how they actually draw the cels! As you perceived, though, I only handled a few of the characters, the main ones like Basara, Mirene and the band charas, two of the bridge operators (Miho & Sally), Sybille and Gigile, and of course Max and Miria, and the flower-girl.

Q I have to follow this up! What's the significance of the flower-girl in MACROSS 7? Is she supposed to be really important?

A Don't think too hard! (Much laughter)

Q Thinking of MACROSS THE MOVIE (aka MACROSS DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE), how long did it take you to revise and redraw the TV series characters for the movie, and was it difficult?



A It took about a year and a half. Yes, it was difficult. I had a hard time! When MACROSS started on TV to its ending, my style gradually changed, so I tried to modify the new movie designs so they wouldn't look too strange.

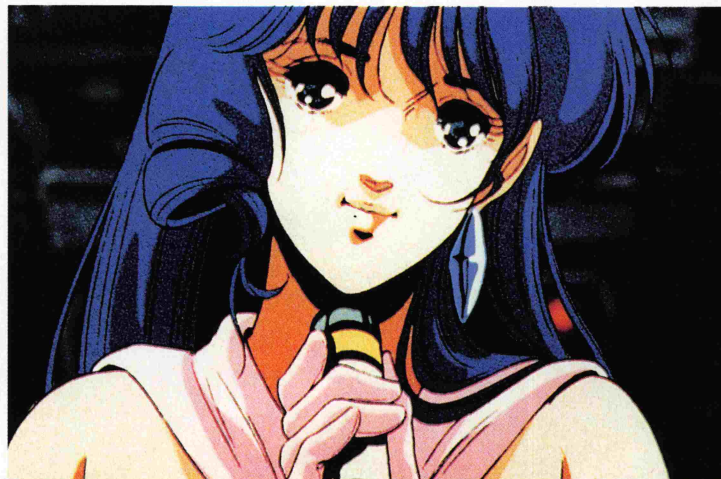
Q A lot of your work has appeared in England - MACROSS II, MACROSS DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE, GUNBUSTER, SALAMANDER. All these were made for a Japanese audience. How do you feel about them coming to a non-Japanese audience?

A It's really funny, but after I finish a product I have no idea how or where it's distributed, even in Japan - nobody tells me. But I'm really very happy to know that my work has been sold worldwide and that people in other countries appreciate and like my work.

Q Your work is very much Japanese - would you change your style to try and do work that could be more easily assimilated into Western productions or modify work for release in other countries?

A Well, the odds are very much against it that I would revise work for international distribution. That's very, very rare.

Q Your work on the GUNDAM: WAR IN THE POCKET series was some of your most striking work.



Lynn Minmay (MACROSS: DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE?)

Now that it would appear Bandai is pushing GUNDAM very strongly again, would you be interested in doing more GUNDAM work, or are you perhaps doing illustrations for GUNDAM products?

A Presently there's no plan for me to do more GUNDAM charas.

Q The final episode is GUNBUSTER is in black and white - can you explain why that was done?

A Regarding that, I had nothing to do with it. Mr. Anno, the director, decided to go black and white on GUNBUSTER 6 - you'd have to ask him why!

Q 3D computer modelling is often applied to things like mecha sequences. Would you ever consider using the techniques to create a character, say for a game?

A I'm not involved in that sort of thing at the moment. I am creating charas for games, but not in 3D. But if I got a request like that, I'd certainly be curious to try it!

Q Computers and animation are becoming very very intertwined. What do you think of the change that's coming to the anime industry as a result?

A I'm aware of that, and it will probably develop more and more as time passes. Unfortunately I'm an 'OldType' as far as these things go, so as technology marches on I get

more and more nervous. However I'm looking forward to the new possibilities of creativity that computers in anime are opening up - I find that very interesting.

Q You already released some of your work on CD-ROM. Are there any further prospects for this, for instance are you involved in producing any interactive work?

A I really don't have anything to do with the computer or technical side of that. However, the staff involved in the project have kept me informed and showed me how the CD-ROM product is actually created. It's a very promising genre and if the opportunity arises I'm very interested in doing some more of this work.

Q Both MACROSS and ORGUSS have had sequels. ORGUSS 2 is visually very different from the original series - were there any specific creative challenges that the new story had, say in designing characters who were identifiable as ORGUSS charas?

A No, not in particular; but the person who created the original ORGUSS and the one who created ORGUSS 2 are two very different individuals and I created the characters according to their requests!

Q Were you given the option of working on MACROSS PLUS? Do you prefer to work on OAVs or TV series designs?

A In the earlier stages of the project, I was going to design the charas for MACROSS PLUS, but things changed and I ended up doing the TV charas instead. Considering the different natures of the TV and OAV formats, the TV audience is much more fickle, so maybe I might have been better off designing the OAV series! But if you look at the final products, both are very fine shows, so everything worked out nicely.

Q Why weren't you involved in MACROSS PLUS, having worked on every other MACROSS?

A If you're thinking it was because of some internal squabble or problem, that wasn't so. As I said, early on there was the idea that I should be involved, but after that the TV project popped up and I had to pick one or the other.

Q Will there be more MACROSS on TV or OAV?

A I think so, but I don't know if I will be involved in it.

Q Would you feel the same as Yoshiyuki Tomino did about GUNDAM leaving his control, if MACROSS continued without your involvement?

A Maybe I should make it clear, in case there are any misunderstandings, that if you compare the situation of Tomino and GUNDAM, then for MACROSS the person in that position would not be me but Shoji Kawamori.

Q *Shoji Kawamori once said that he never wanted to do a sequel to MACROSS. Do you know how it came about that he changed his mind and decided to do MACROSS 7, and will you work with him again?*

A First off, Mr. Kawamori is a very funny and very, very talented person. It just so happens that this story about "I won't ever do a sequel again" changes every time it pops up, so I wouldn't put too much credence on it! Basically, it's like, let's say, a guy is single and is spoiled and money is no object; he can say 'oh, I'll never do it again', but once he's married and has children, he needs money! (Much laughter.) But as a friend of his and someone who admires his talent I'm very happy for him to get involved deeply in many projects, and if possible I want to work with him again. My basic philosophy is that if work comes in, I don't say "I choose" or "I don't choose" - if I can do it, if I'm available, I will do it to the best of my ability. As an example, in the field involving creation of an idea, plots and so on, people will occasionally take a break and refresh themselves and then get back into the next job when they are ready and able, but character designers have to constantly draw to keep up their skills. If I slack off there's a real chance that my style will change so drastically that it would be a problem, so I feel I have to keep drawing all the time to maintain my skill level. Amongst artists there's the type that can practice and keep their skills up that way, but my form of practice is doing the job!

Q *Are there any plans for working with Mr. Kawamori?*

A Not at the moment, but I want to do so if a project comes up.

Q *Could you tell us about the state of the animation market in Japan today, and whether it's easier or harder for new talent to break in and establish himself as a character designer?*

A Well, each case will be different depending on the person, so it's difficult to say how easy or hard it might be to break in. One thing I can say for sure is that the up-and-coming generation of character designers is technically very good. Skillwise there's been a marked improvement. Because of that, I can foresee that among that rank of people there'll be a real hot one coming up!

Q *Could you name any particular future stars?*

A That's easy - look at the current hot anime and look for the names you don't recognise!

Q *Yesterday Mr. Ishiguro told us some interesting stories about the MACROSS TV series production - what was working on that series*

like for you?

A Always work, work, work - it was tough!

Q *Was that because of the weekly TV schedule?*

A Yes.

Q *When somebody comes to you and asks you to design a character, how much input do you have into the design? Can you go back and change things?*

A Oh yes, I have to put my own ideas in. As we discuss it we exchange opinions, and that's how characters are created - based on combined input.

Q *Is there any chance that anytime soon there might be plans to animate your MARIONETTE GENERATION story, and following up on that, how do you feel your skills as a manga artist have developed over the years of your work on that?*

A There's zero chance of it being animated! A proficient manga artist in Japan would do roughly 30 pages to 100 pages a month, but when I was doing MARIONETTE GENERATION my monthly output was eight pages! I don't consider myself a manga artist at all.

Q *It's said that publishers force manga artists to work so hard that they are often burnt out in a few years. Does that happen to anime artists and designers?*

A Well, manga artists don't neces-

sarily quit because they're burned out. Some of them are so popular and have made so much money in those few years that they can afford to retire! But to be fair, most of them are just working steadily doing their job. There are a few exceptionally lucky and talented people, but not everyone becomes rich. Regarding animators, you could say their work is half art and half hard labour, and there's much that needs to be discussed and hopefully modified better in the work environment. Compared with American animation, the work environment in anime is probably very different. Like manga artist, a few animators are well-off and popular and famous, but most

just work and work to make a living. The animator probably has the worst occupation in the anime industry. It's physically very hard and dreadfully difficult, so the majority of animators will work three to five years and find they can't make ends meet. They'll be forced to quit, not because they want to, just to make enough money to live on.

Q *With the merging interest in anime fandom outside of Japan, in the USA and Europe, do you think this will affect the industry?*

A I can't be an authoritative voice on this subject, but if anime becomes more popular abroad and more foreign companies want to fund programmes, I would welcome that.

Q *As to the future, do you plan to write and direct your own feature one day?*

A I don't feel I'm qualified to do such work!

Q *What's your opinion of the convention so far?*

A I'm having fun.

Q *And do you have any advice for young designers?*

A Don't give up!



Above: Christina McKenzie from MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM 0080: WAR IN THE POCKET
AIM FOR THE TOP! GUNBUSTER artwork for the "Homecoming" LD Box set.



IDOL PROJECT



IDOL PROJECT 1 - STARLAND FESTIVAL

CAST

MIMU EMILTON

Mariko Kouda

RUKA ESSENBOLKA

Satomi Korogi

CORVETTE HIRES

Kikuko Inoue

LAYLA B. SIMMONS

Aya Hisakawa

EXTRA KAIDO

Mika Kanai

PAL-PU

Hinako Kanemaru

SHION

Rie Iwatsubo

YURI

Ai Orikasa

BAITO-GIRL (i.e. part-time worker)

Chinami Nishimura

CREW

DIRECTOR

Yasushi Nagaoka

SCRIPT

T. Amano

CHARA DESIGN & STORYBOARDS

Noritaka Suzuki

ART DIRECTOR

Yukiko Iijima

MUSIC

Kanji Salto

SOUND DIRECTOR

Hiroki Matsuoka

ORIGINAL STORY

This is based on a computer game for the Psocon.

ON SALE

IDOL PROJECT part 1, "Starland Festival", is on sale now, catalogue no. JSLA 22639. It runs 30 mins and costs 5800 yen. (That's about £37 as we go to press.) Part 2 "Tropical Dimension" goes on sale on 22nd November. The CD soundtrack is available now, catalogue number JSCA 29015; the CD Drama will be out at the end of October.

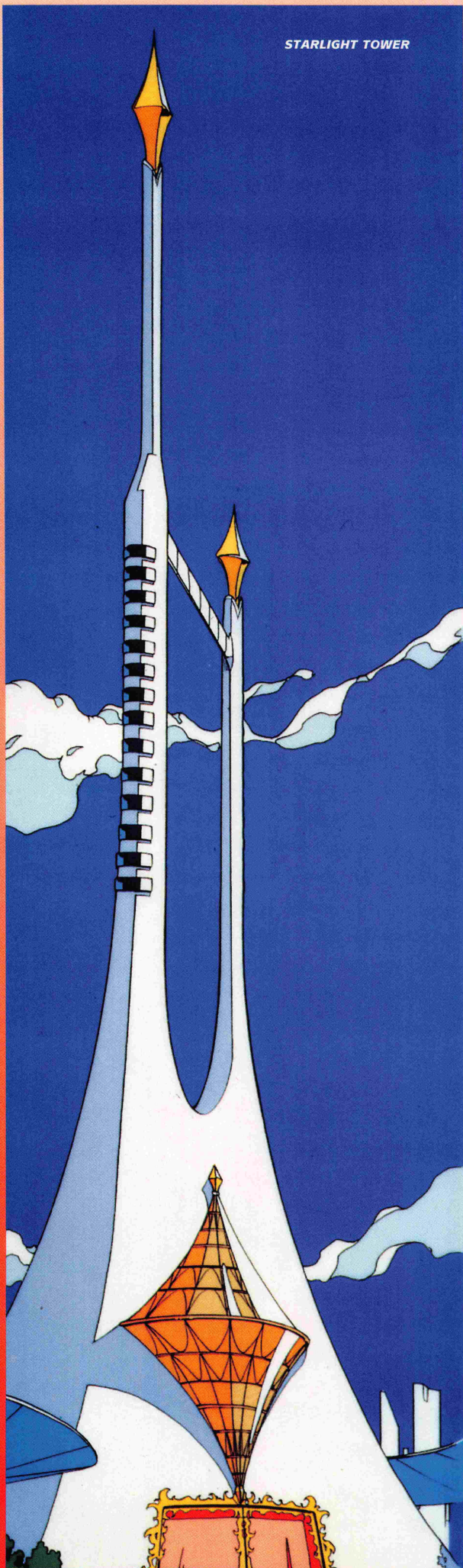
This is the story of an ordinary teenage girl ... and monsters, acts of kindness, magical battles and the other wacky, wierd trials and tribulations she meets on the road to becoming an Excellent Idol, as told by our very own God of Cute,
PETER EVANS of SAKURA STUDIO

The pictures are used by kind permission of KSS with the invaluable assistance of Sakura Studio.



IDOL PROJECT
 Illustration by Noritaka Sugita (Studio QW)
 Finalwork by Motomi Tomiharu

STARLIGHT TOWER



SYNOPSIS

Mimu Emilton, a cute 14-year-old girl, wanted to become an idol. She had applied for a place at the Excellent Idol Audition at the Starland Festival, held in the Starland Tower, where the next major idol would be chosen. She even had a hologram pendant, sent out by former idol Yuri, now idol 'president', which gave an encouraging message - "Follow your beliefs". When she woke up on the morning of the audition and discovered she was late, she listened to Yuri's message and psyched herself up before rushing out of the house to the Starland Tower.

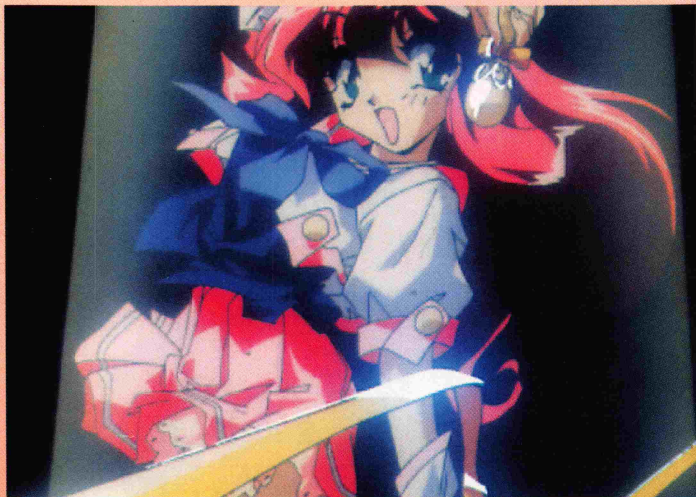
While she was running through the Starland Festival grounds waxing lyrical about what it would be like to be an Excellent Idol, she was tripped by a little girl. The child said she was lost and needed help, so Mimiu picked her up and carried her on her back. Then she said she was hungry and hadn't eaten for

three days, and asked Mimiu for some ice-cream. Mimiu bought some, and they sat down on a bench to eat it; then a group of strange crows attacked them, knocking off the little girl's hood. Mimiu was able to see her face for the first time, and realised to her surprise that it was none other than Ruka, one of the six Excellent Idols, the stars of the idol world! Ruka gave her a piece of advice: "If you want to be an excellent idol, smile. A smile is the standard language, understood all over the world."

Then the gates of the audition hall opened, and the Eighth Excellent Idol Audition began. Mimiu started running for the Tower where the audition hall was located.

On the way she ran into Corvette, another of the six Excellent Idols. Corvette was performing (singing and dancing) and pulled Mimiu onto her stage, holding her tight and singing very seductively to her, saying "Yes, that smile is





very cute. Let's dance!" (This part is a little bit ecchi [*perverted!*] as Corvette pokes Mimu's breast!)

Mimu didn't recognise her and asked "Who are you?", but Corvette just asked her if she was the person who had helped Ruka and said "You're just like Ruka-chan, very pretty."

Then Corvette and Mimu crashed to the ground together and Mimu finally realised that the person lying next to her was the Excellent Idol Corvette. Corvette also had a piece of advice for Mimu - "Rhythm, if you're going to audition." As Mimu ran off, Corvette said "Oh, my pretty girl. Don't go to Tinkle Street, Stage 7. Very dangerous!"

Mimu ran off thinking about rhythm, and Stage 7 was precisely where she ended up. The Excellent Idols Extra and Layla were there, battling it out with their songs as their stages rose higher and higher. Layla was a wild rock singer with a guitar, and Extra was a

calm 'ojosama' singer [*a refined, wellbred young lady*] playing the piano. The Layla fans, punk rockers with mohicans, and the Extra fans, guys in white tuxedos and girls in wedding dresses, were cheering their favourites on, each side yelling out encouragement. The stages rose so high that the whole setup collapsed, and Mimu got caught in the middle.

She surfaced from the debris only to meet Pal-Pu, the kung-fu Idol, who liked fighting more than anything else in the world. Pal-Pu pounded all her fans, who were very happy about being beaten by such a pretty girl! Then she approached Mimu and asked her if she wanted to be kicked. Mimu said no thank you, she was on her way to the audition. Noticing how nervous she was, Pal-Pu told her to 'relax'.

Getting away from Pal-Pu, Mimu ran on towards the Tower where the auditions were being held. This time,

she got caught in another battle between some crows and a group of ninja; one of the crows smacked into her face and she was knocked out. When she woke, she was in a Japanese style room with Shion, the ninja Idol. It was dark outside, so she thought that she had missed the audition; but Shion told her to make her heart calm, and said they could still make it if they tried really hard (but with a calm heart!)

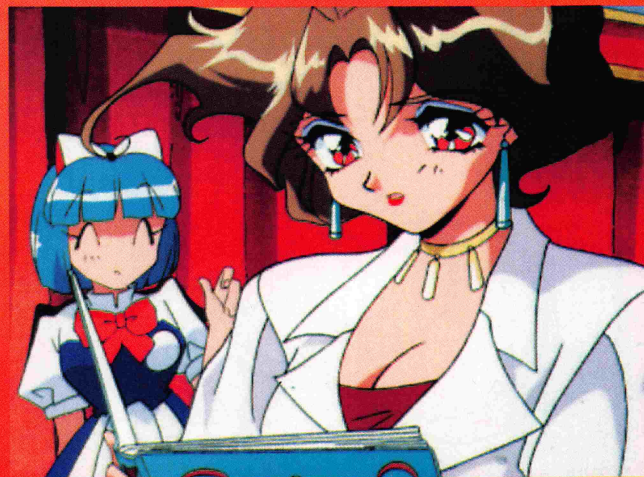
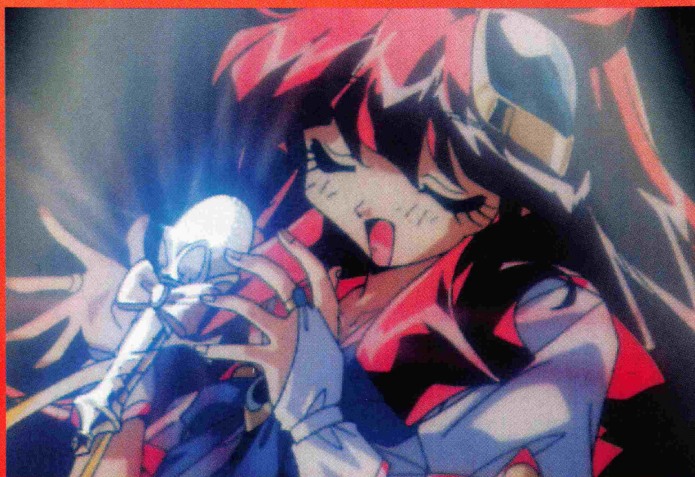
Together they rushed towards the audition tower. The gates had started to close, and the crows were still fighting the ninja, but with the help of Shion's ninja assistants they avoided the attacks and made it inside the tower just as the giant doors closed. Mimu was the last contestant, and all of the crowd had already gone home; but the other Excellent Idols were all inside the audition hall, and they were waiting to hear Mimu's song.

Mimu was sad that everyone had gone home, but she

decided to give it her best for the wonderful people who had waited to see her, the Excellent Idols. But just as she was about to sing, there was a huge crash as three crows broke into the tower and changed into giant monsters. They were after the Excellent Idols who defended the kingdom of Starland. The Idols tried to fight them off.

One of the monsters accidentally knocked against the tower Mimu was standing on and dislodged the Sacred Golden Microphone. Mimu dived to catch it, as did everyone else; as she caught it, all the other Excellent Idols landed on top of her. Now that they were temporarily entangled, the monsters caught them and carried them off in a giant flying microphone! What will happen next?

To be continued ...



Idol Project

アイドルプロジェクト



ANIME FX FANZINE OF THE YEAR AWARDS 1995

Once again, we invite you to nominate your favourite fanzines, fan writers and fan artists for honour and glory, including the Big One - the title ANIME FANZINE OF THE YEAR 1995!

Fanzines are vital to a healthy, active fandom; and a healthy, active fandom is good news for the commercial sector in any sphere. That's one reason why we support and encourage the production of more and better fanzines. The other is that many of us here on TEAM AFX came from the fanzine scene ourselves, and we want to see it thriving in anime and manga fandom.

Last year's winners offered a wide variety of good writing, good art and good fun (not all of it clean, but hey, everyone lets their hair down sometimes!) This year, we invite you once again to nominate your favourites for the titles, which come with a certificate and a small anime-related prize as well.

WHAT TO DO

All you have to do is send a letter explaining who you are nominating and why, along with a copy of the fanzine nominated, to our Editor, Helen McCarthy, at our editorial address, marking your envelope FANZINE AWARDS 1995. (Sorry, but we can't return the fanzines - if you don't want to send your original you can send a photocopy.) The categories and last year's winners are listed below. You can nominate for all the categories, or just some of them. The three entrants with most nominations for each title will then be judged by the professionals here at TEAM AFX and a winner in each category selected. You have until January 31st 1996 to send in your nomination and winners will be announced in April 1996.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

We define a fanzine as follows :

1) It is published entirely by a fan or group of fans in their own time, without input from a professional publishing house.

2) It is not published for profit, nor does it receive any commercial sponsorship or support except for the revenues from advertising sales, or any Government or local authority support.

3) It is not devoted exclusively to promoting the products of one company or one video label. (It may, however, be devoted to the work of one artist or group of artists.)

All fanzines nominated must be in a European language, published in Europe, Scandinavia, the USA, Australasia, Canada or South America during the year 1995. Each must print within the fanzine the editor's name and a contact address. Nominations for FANZINE OF THE YEAR must be primarily devoted to anime and manga, that is, at least 50% of the content must be anime and manga related. Nominations for individual article or artwork awards must be anime or manga related but may have appeared in completely unrelated fanzines.

THE CATEGORIES and LAST YEAR'S WINNERS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE FANZINE OF THE YEAR 1994 - **ANIMACE**, Colchester, UK

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE FANZINE OF THE YEAR 1994 - **ANIMELAND**, Paris, France

BEST FACTUAL ARTICLE BY A FANWRITER - **J.A.M.M.**, Belgium, for the UROTSUKIDOJI anime/manga overview by Emmanuel van Melkebeke and Steven Smets

BEST OPINION/EDITORIAL BY A FANWRITER - **ANIMISM**, England for the opinion piece A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

BEST FICTION BY A FANWRITER - **TALES FROM THE CAJUN SUSHI BAR**, England for CHILDHOOD FRIEND, a TONARI NO TOTORO story by Harry Payne.

BEST COVER ARTWORK BY A FAN ARTIST - the **ANIMACE 5** cover by Steve Rushbrook

BEST INTERIOR ARTWORK BY A FAN ARTIST - work in **LEGEND OF THE O.V.A. FIEND** by Jules Merriman

NEXT UP

DANGEROUS GIRLS ARE ON THE LOOSE!!



GUNSMITH CATS THE ANIME

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

CIRCULAR QUAY • SYDNEY



KABOOM!

Animation

12 November 1994 - 5 March 1995

© TEZUKA PRODUCTIONS 1994

KABOOM! ANIMATION

'An Explosive Animation experience from America and Japan'

12 November 1994 - 5 March 1995

THE LIFE OF ILLUSION

Australian's second International Conference on Animation

3-5 March 1995

These two major events took place in Sydney this Spring.

FRED PATTEN, one of the invited guests, reports on both.

These two events were held in conjunction with each other, at Sydney, Australia's Museum of Contemporary Art. The **Kaboom!** exhibition ran from 12 November 1994 through 5 March 1995. The three-day international animation conference, **The Life of Illusion**, was held on the last three days of the exhibition to mark its finale.

The **Kaboom!** exhibition filled the two lower levels of the Museum. (The third floor displayed two different exhibitions of fine-art photography during this period. The upper floors are administrative.) The front of the six-story, architecturally Art Deco museum, facing onto Sydney's scenic harbor across from the Opera House, was covered by a gigantic full-color reproduction of the **Kaboom!** exhibit poster featuring Astro Boy. The Museum's estimate of the exhibit's total attendance during its four months is 90,000.

The **Kaboom!** exhibition showcased two American animators, Robert Clampett and Ralph Bakshi, and two Japanese animators, Osamu Tezuka and Hayao Miyazaki. There was a smaller showcase for John Kricfalusi's *The Ren and Stimpy Show* and Katsuhiro Otomo's *AKIRA*; and then a potpourri of other current American and Japanese animation, including *Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures* (Ralph Bakshi and John Kricfalusi), *Beavis and Butt-head* (Mike Judge), *KABUTO* (Buichi Terasawa), *RANMA 1/2* (Rumiko Takahashi), *APPLE-SEED* (Masamune Shirow), *BUB-BLEGUM CRISIS* (Kenichi Sonoda) and others.

ANIME DOWN UNDER

The first-level entrance opened into a room featuring the four show-cased animators. Each had an 'island' containing three video monitors showing endlessly-cycling brief samples of that animator's works, plus a couple of larger-than-life cartoon portraits of their major characters. All of these videos had their sound on, deliberately creating a carnival-like white-noise babble intended to plunge the viewer into a 'toon world atmosphere'. The next room had similar islands of video monitors showing the smaller show-cases. Two other rooms displayed animation art (original pencil drawings, storyboards, cels, posters, anime music LP record covers, etc), and a wide variety of pop-cultural merchandising items.

The second level was sectioned into two theatres divided by an arcade of video games. The arcade contained several games with elaborate computer graphics, set for 'free' play. One theatre presented video interviews recorded especially for the exhibit, with American and Japanese animation-industry notables such as Bakshi, Kricfalusi, Judge, Miyazaki, Terasawa, Takahashi, Otomo, Sonoda, animation historian & producer Jerry Beck, U.S. Manga Corps' John O'Donnell, and jazz composer John Zorn (commenting on cartoon music scores). The other theatre ran a medley which included a potpourri of animated music videos, another of title-credit animation with theme songs from American TV cartoons from the 1960s to the present, and the AKIRA PRODUCTION REPORT on the making of AKIRA.

All of these videos were designed as 'samples' for short attention spans. The average person could walk through the exhibition, stopping for a minute or two at each monitor plus five or ten minutes in each theatre, and see the entire exhibition in about an hour. The serious animation enthusiast who wanted to watch each video all the way through would have to spend over eleven hours there.

The **Kaboom!** exhibit premiered with a gala formal dinner attended by

John Kricfalusi and Sherrie Clampett (Bob's daughter) from America; New South Wales Arts Minister Peter Collins, and Australian notables including the Museum's patrons, fine-arts and cinema professors from universities around Australia, and several leading Australian animators. A screening of *Ren and Stimpy* episodes was sold out. On November 15, an Australian premiere of Japanese animation was introduced by guests Takayuki Matsutani, the president of Tezuka Production; cartoonist Buichi Terasawa, and his assistant, Junco Ito. The films were Tezuka's UNICO, JUMPING and BROKEN DOWN FILM; Terasawa's RAVEN TENGU KABUTO; and UROTSUKIDOJI : LEGEND OF THE OVERFIEND, parts 4 & 5. On February 5, a second public screening included a popular-demand repeat of the *Ren and Stimpy* episodes plus the Australian premieres of *Cool World* and a *Beavis and Butt-head* sample from America, and OLD MAN Z (ROUJIN Z) and MERMAID FOREST from Japan. A final public screening was held as part of the **Life of Illusion** conference.

The **Life of Illusion** conference was organised by Dr. Alan Cholodenko, the head of the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Sydney. It was scheduled to mark the closing of the **Kaboom!** exhibit. Its first day convened at the Sydney auditorium of the Japan Cultural Centre, and its second and third days were at the

main auditorium of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

The conference featured two foreign guest speakers, Fred Patten from America and Kosei Ono from Japan, with 17 speakers from several universities and colleges around Australia. This was an academic conference, not a fan convention; the attendance was only about 100. (It also rained all weekend; and this was the weekend of Sydney's annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Both of these doubtless cut into the conference's attendance.)

The conference consisted of a series of 45-minute papers which analysed intellectual aspects of animation. Ono spoke on "Post-War History of Japanese Animated Films and the Sense of Levitation in Hayao Miyazaki's Feature Works". Patten gave a presentation on "Simba versus

Kimba : Parallels between KIMBA THE WHITE LION and *The Lion King*". Other speakers covered animation ranging from Clampett's *The Great Piggy Bank Robbery* (with Daffy Duck) to Bakshi's *The Lord of the Rings*, Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King*, Kishiro's GUNNM / BATTLE ANGEL ALITA, and Takahashi's RANMA 1/2. Some of the

topics were more general, such as Pauline Moore's "Cuteness [*Kawaii*] in Japanese Animation : When Velvet Gloves Meet Iron Fists", or Jane Goodall's "Animation and Species Confusion", which examined anthropo/metamorphic violence from "the duck that ran amuck" to "the species-dissolving powers of the Overfiend". To quote one of the

synopses from the conference's program summary :

JOHN CONOMOS

The Odd Couple, or, Happy Happy, Joy Joy
This paper will explore in a transverse, speculative manner the intertextual delineation of the animatic apparatus in the cultic Nickeltoot *The Ren and Stimpy Show*. Mobilising an interdisciplinary approach, the speaker will address questions of abjection, animatophilia, carnivalisation, dialogism and the frame of the frame in a multifaceted discursive attempt to colour in the more distinctive polyphonic cultural, kinetic-visual and theoretical concerns of our Spumco odd couple.

(There are plans to publish these papers in a Proceedings in later 1995 or early 1996. The papers of the first Australian International Conference on Animation, **The Illusion of Life**, ed by Alan Cholodenko [1988, with Chuck Jones as guest speaker], were published as an illustrated Proceedings by the University of Sydney's Department of Fine Arts, which is still available in both a hardcover and paperbound edition. This can be ordered in the USA from Indiana University Press for \$35.00 hardbound or \$14.95 paperbound plus shipping. Call +1-800 842 6796 for credit card purchases.)

The films shown at the conference drew a slightly larger audience than the papers. These were the Australian premieres of Tezuka's LEGEND OF THE FOREST and Miyazaki's MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO, plus ROBOT CARNIVAL, the first episode of 8 MAN AFTER, and GREAT CONQUEST : THE ROMANCE OF THREE KINGDOMS.

As a postscript to the conference, Kosei Ono & Fred Patten gave guest lectures two days later at the Power Institute of Fine Arts on the campus of the University of Sydney. Ono talked on "Animation in Japan : How I Grew Up With American Cartoons", while Patten reciprocated with "Anime in America : The Occidental Discovery of Japanese Animation".

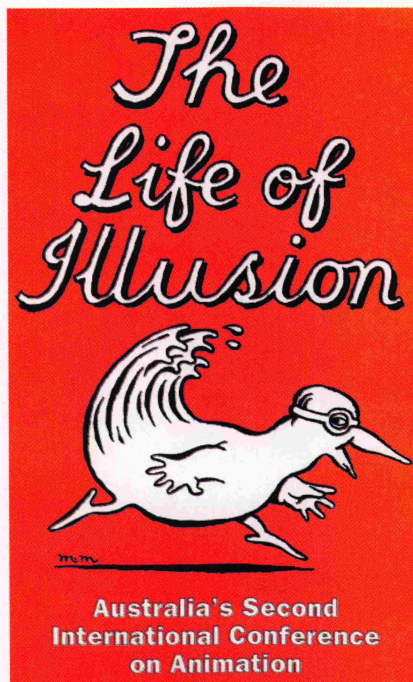


Photo: Jim Trifillis



LIFE OF ILLUSION organiser
Dr. Alan Cholodenko

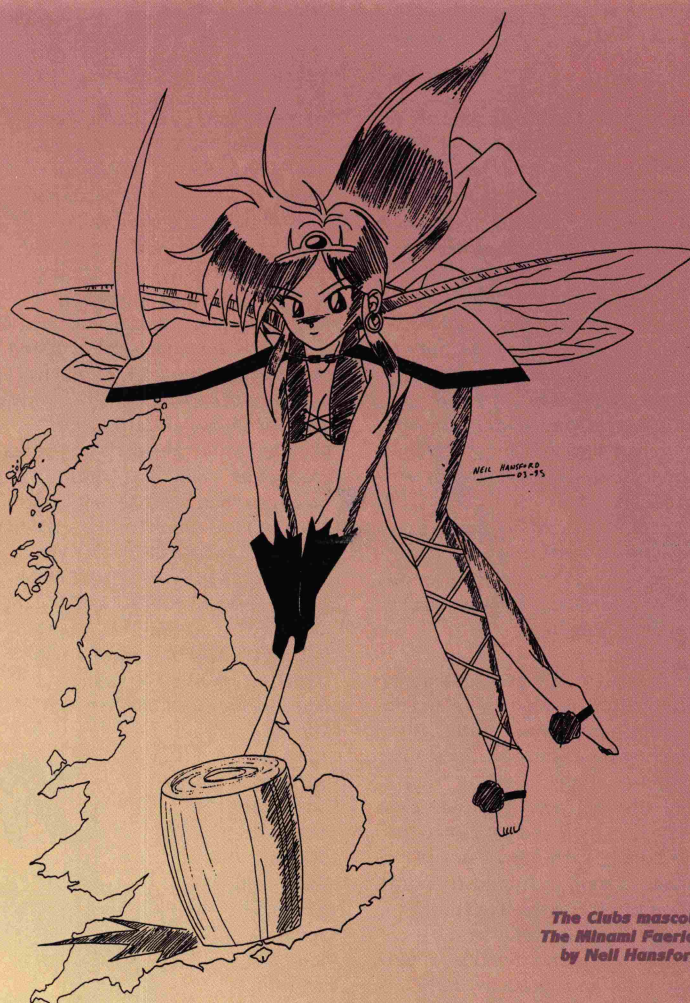
**MINAMICON,
Sunday 23rd July
1995
by Peter Cullen, editor
of cheeselovin'
fanzine Red Leopard**

Minami Anime, the 'club with added Kawaii', took on the daunting task of organising the first UK anime convention of 1995, a one day affair held at the **Hilton National Hotel, Portsmouth**. As a dealer (hemhem) I arrived (with Harry in tow) at eight in the morning and joined the five or so others who had been able to summon the energy to turn up that early to set up the traders' room. Anime Projects made a magnificent showing, with the usual video/TV setup demonstrating latest releases. Among these were the English dubs of fan classics **BUBBLEGUM CRISIS** and **RIDING BEAN**, which enthralled and fascinated everyone, although the jury is still out on whether they're actually any good. Other dealers included fanzines (ourselves, **British Manga**, **Futuranime**), **Venus Models**, **Mondo Comics**, and a 'Bring & Buy' table where you could pick up **ODIN** for £1 or **THE**

GUYVER for 8p. Pioneer sent videos but no-one to man the table and Western Connection didn't show up at all, keeping the corporate presence down to a minimum.

Con members trickled in through the course of the morning, eventually reaching a total of some 150, pretty respectable for a locally aimed one day con. The committee had wisely booked fairly small rooms which were nicely filled by the attendees, though a minor problem arose during the talks by guest of honour **Helen McCarthy** and **Steve Kyte** in the art room. Unsurprisingly, everyone wanted to be there, but it was the smallest room of the lot and people were sitting on the floor, sitting on laps, or, worst of all, stuck behind the pinboards which held the fan art. The art itself was, incidentally, of exceptional quality, but I'm sure no-one would have minded interrupting the video programme for an hour to house the talk.

The masquerade was short and sweet, much like its entrants, and, although brief, showed the terrific enthusiasm with which fan costumes are created. My favourite,



*The Clubs mascot:
The Minami Faerie,
by Neil Hansford*

MINAMICON '95



*Phil Laskey's drawing of
Benten (Urusei Yatsura)
used on the back cover
of the Con Book.*

and I think that of many others, was fourteen-year-old **Lisa Munns'** splendid **Sailor Jupiter** outfit which was astoundingly authentic.

Now to the video programme itself, vital for newcomers but increasingly less important with each subsequent con, as the older fans will often go entire weekends without watching anything. The selection was well balanced and, in line with **Minami's** policy, contained a significantly high cute factor. The committee had done a great job of having most of the films subtitled, although the eagerly awaited **TAIHO SHICHAUZO** (You're Under Arrest) was in original form. This writer's favourites from the show included **RANMA 1/2** (of course), **THE GIRL FROM PHANTASIA**, **MARMALADE BOY** (twice) and some brand new anime - notably **Yuzo Takada's BLUE SEED**.

The non-video programme was understated, consisting of little more than talks by **Steve Kyte** and **Helen McCarthy** (which overran by nearly an hour, but a welcome one). **Steve's** talk was about how to be an anime artist, while **Helen's** was ostensibly about the US conventions, but ended up being about everything under the sun, including **ANIME UK's** change of format and

forthcoming (but now historical) change of name. As usual, both were as interesting and informative as ever, although a more structured programme might have been more satisfying for older fans. Taking into consideration the obvious difficulty of getting international guests for a small scale con, there was certainly enough going on to hold the attention for a day.

Small criticisms aside (being a little unfair to these successful first-timers) **MinamiCon** was a terrifically fun day, with every attendee echoing the desire to see a **MinamiCon II**.

STOP PRESS: As we go to print the **Minamicon Committee** has announced that there will definitely be a **Minamicon II**. Dates have yet to be announced but it will be around the same time of year in 1996.

Anyone wishing to find out more about **MINAMI ANIME** - the Club should contact: **MARK CLEAVER**, 15 New Road, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 8EN or **NEIL HANSFORD** 22 Lime Grove, Paulsgrove, Hampshire PO6 4DG



ANIME CLASSICS



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Series overview: ARISLAN, RG VEDA, GAIARTH; Japanese-Indian co-production RAMAYANA



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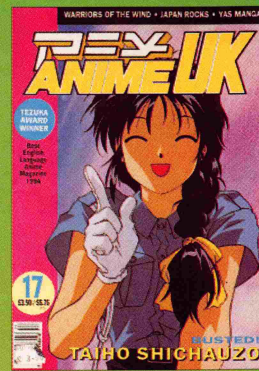
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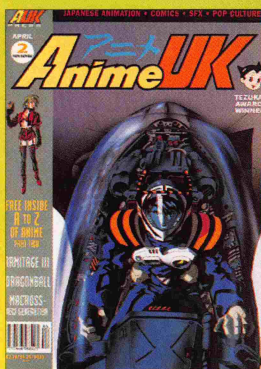
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Introducing NE-CHAN our new mascot; Enter the DRAGONBALL; Look at POWER RANGERS



NEW SERIES - 2
The New Generations - MACROSS; Report - GAMES CAPSULE; Cyberbabe - ARMITAGE III



NEW SERIES - 3
Japan's influence on cartoonists - ASIAN MANGA; SFXPRESS: DAIRANGER; PATLABOR - The Genesis



NEW SERIES - 4
MANGA IN FOCUS - the girls are back; Deadly KEKKO KAMEN; For kids - DANCUGAR



NEW SERIES - 5
Festival report - NO MORE HIROSHIMAS; ANIME on the Internet; Classic SPACE FIREBIRD

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アニメ AnimeFX

LIVE & KICKING

by Jim McLennan



The latest 'live-action anime', following in the steps of "City Hunter" and "Wicked City" is the first Japanese entry to receive a release here, and is certainly the most accurate translation yet seen. While both Hong Kong entries were truer to the spirit of their source than the letter, this film will be instantly recognisable to fans of "Doomed Megalopolis", the title released in four parts by Manga last year, and recently screened by Channel 4.

This is probably no bad thing, as the similarity extends to both being practically incomprehensible to start with, characters and plot swirling around, and little or no explanation or introduction for the first quarter of an hour or so. It's important not to get flummoxed: just sit back, go with the flow, and you should eventually get the hang of it. In case you don't, it's about evil magician Kato, and his attempts to waken the guardian spirit of Tokyo in order to destroy the city. The reasons for this are never fully explored: he's a bad guy, it's just the sort of thing that he does, right? Arrayed against him are assorted scientists and shamen, led by Keiko, a descendant of the guardian spirit herself. Let battle commence!

The effects used are of a variable standard: the model-work is really very good and the optical FX aren't bad either, but the whole is let down by some distinctly dodgy stop-motion monsters. These give the film a curiously 1950's feel, and there's little apparent trace of the much-vaunted H.R. Giger designs. Must have been something he did on the back of a fag packet.

However, generally it looks very cool, with excellent cinematography and good period feel. Also worthy of note is the lack of background music: there are long periods without any at all, refreshing after a summer where it seemed every movie had an accompanying soundtrack LP. There are times when silence can be golden.

It'll be interesting to see if Manga will also release the sequel (IMHO, it's actually a better movie) which carries on the story, beginning with the fire-bombing of Tokyo. But it's good to see this more subtle and atmospheric Japanese film getting a release; it certainly makes a change from Godzilla!

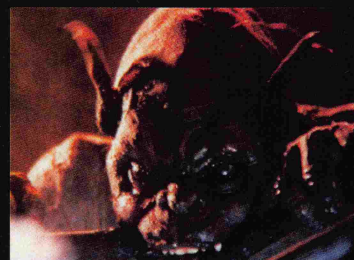
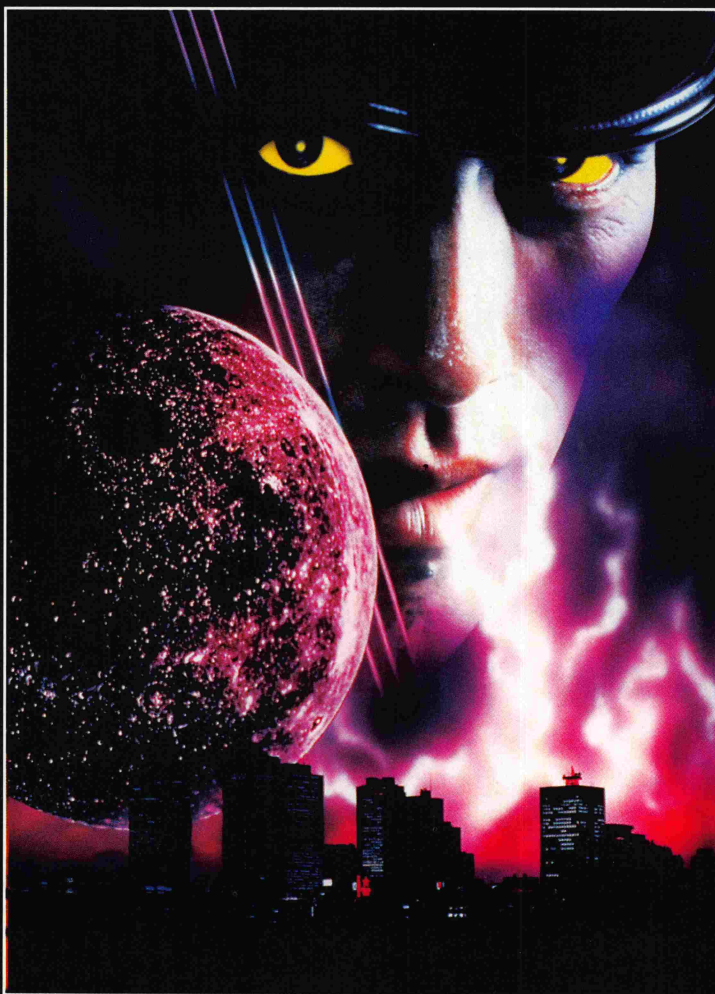


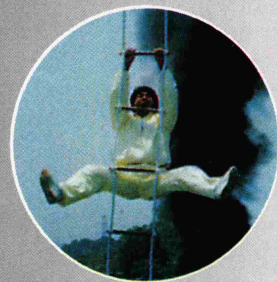
The sorcerer Kato in his anime and live action guises.



TOKYO - THE LAST MEGALOPOLIS

Manga Video, MANL 1004
102 mins. approx, Cert 15





The subtitle of "Police Story 3", "Supercop", is an accurate summation of the film in general: Jackie plays a Hong Kong policeman sent to mainland China to assist with capturing a major-league drug baron. He helps one of the villain's henchmen 'escape' from prison, in order to get himself into the inner circle, but this is only the start. He's assisted by a Chinese officer (Michelle Khan), and by bad luck, ends up in the same resort as his long-suffering girlfriend, familiar to fans of the earlier entries in the series. Since she doesn't know about his undercover mission, will his cover be blown?

The major problem with the film is its uneasy blending of comedy, drama and action: it can't quite make it's mind up which sort of movie it wants to be. As a result, none of it quite works: the humour, especially, falls flat, most notably in the scene where Jackie's male boss suddenly turns up, in China, pretending to be our hero's mother. It just isn't funny, and things like this mean that when the drug-lord shows a vicious nature by casually killing those who displease him, you keep waiting for a punchline. By the time you realise one isn't forthcoming, it's too late. A far better example of Jackie's dramatic ability can be seen in "Crime Story", directed by Kirk Wong; out to rent on 20/20 Vision, it's a far more even and smooth piece of work.

The film does have an absolute saving grace; the final 20 minutes which are utterly jaw-dropping, up there with Chan's best stunt work. Our hero is dragged through downtown Kuala Lumpur beneath a helicopter (and as ever with Jackie, you can tell it's him, not a stuntman or any back-projection), before being dumped on top of a moving train, for a spectacular end-fight. It's only when you see the traditional out-takes under the end credits, that you realise how dangerous the sequence was, with Chan nearly falling under the train. Most amazing of all, he breaks new ground by perhaps becoming the first leading man ever to be run over by a helicopter. Watch it and wince.

Apart from that, it's not one of Chan's most memorable films. One to rent first, to see if the astonishing climax is worth your money.

POLICE STORY 3 - SUPERCOP

Hong Kong Classics,
V1A 7569, 91 mins.
approx, Cert 15



NEWS IN BRIEF

A new shop has arrived in Central London, catering to fans of HK movies. Run by Rick Baker of Eastern Heroes, it marks an expansion from his current micro-shop in Camden, with a wide range of books, tapes and laserdiscs on offer. The shop, at 96 Shaftesbury Avenue, was officially opened on September 2nd by Chan-fanJonathan Ross.

Made in Hong Kong are releasing a widescreen, subtitled version of "A Better Tomorrow" on video-tape for £12.99; this format was previously only available in a box set or as a laser-disc.

Jim McLennan writes more on Hong Kong Films, Asian babes, Government Incompetence, adult cinema and World Travel in his excellent fanzine, TRASH CITY. For more details write to him c/o 34 Perran Road, Tulse Hill, London SW2.



DRAGONBALL ULTIMATE BATTLE 22

**Playstation
Bandai**
Japanese import £50 - £75

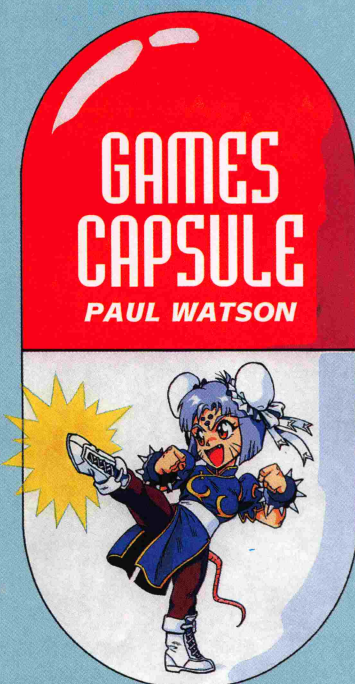
Once again Bandai serve up a course of Dragonball to the gaming public. This time, however, it's Playstation owners who are holding the joystick.

With Dragonball coming to its conclusion in Japan recently, Bandai's coders have had the entire manga from which to pull the characters for this game. You can play as any one of twenty two characters from Toriyama's manga - not being spoilt for choice, eh!

The game engine has been changed for the Playstation version and the one feature noticeably missing is the split screen option. This has been replaced with sprite scaling to create the feeling of distance and allows for much faster gameplay. Combos can now be put to better effect and it's now possible to make some incredibly damaging moves.

The game modes available include the standard one and two player options and tournament mode and, for this version, build up mode. A character's attributes can be built up and saved onto the memory card and then taken to a friend's house to fight their character. Not exactly a replacement for a story mode but quite interesting never the less.

Graphics and sound are where the major improvements come into place. The game contains stacks of sampled speech and the background music consists of orchestrated tracks from the Dragonball series. All in all it sounds great. The graphics of the various battle arenas are



generated with polygons. These rotate around and zoom about quite nicely and, despite the odd glitch, look very good indeed, helping to create a feeling of depth. The animated pre-fight sequences are a mixed affair with some looking great and others looking a bit ropey, especially as the animators didn't take the time to lip sync the things! Luckily these can be turned off giving you the benefit of faster loading times.

Despite the few flaws in the game Dragonball is enormous fun to play. The huge roster of characters plus the few hidden ones encountered (Young Son Goku and Mr Satan to name two!!) make for a lot of variety and it certainly plays as well as Toh Shin Den!

85%



MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM

**Playstation
Bandai**
Japanese import £50 - £75

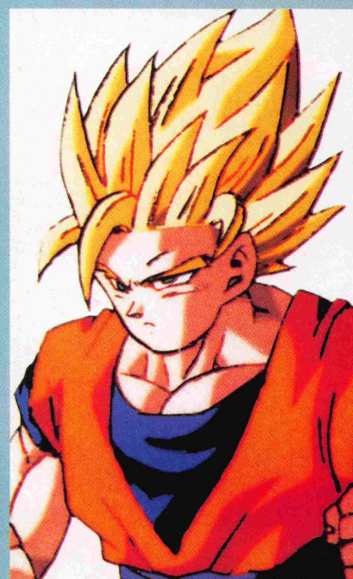
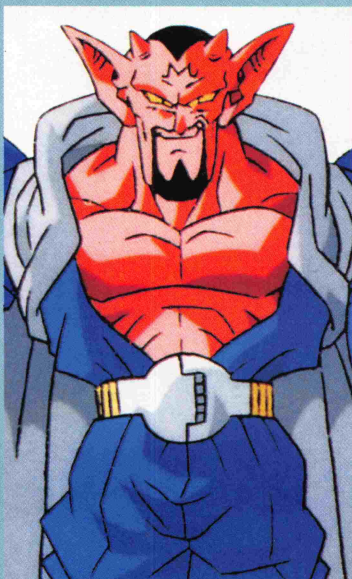
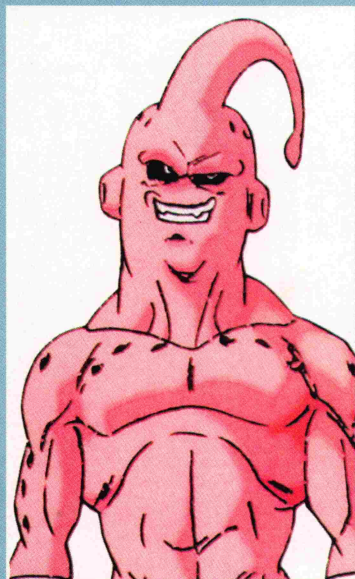
Gundam, oh for a decent Gundam game. Once again one of Japan's founder mecha shows blunders onto another home format and once again we are faced with a very poor piece of software.

Things start off looking quite promising with a 3D computer generated intro showing your mecha powering up, but even these sequences are a bit jerky compared to some of the other games that use similar techniques.

The gameplay, what there is of it,

involves you taking on various enemy mecha over a series of locations. Starting off in a colony above the earth your first mission is to fend off a squadron of enemy mechs. The next level is set in space and more or less consists of exactly the same thing with the addition of a specific target for destruction. The game then progresses onto the earth for a few stages before putting you back in space again. At the start of each stage and the destruction of a specified target you get a little computer generated sequence to watch but the game is so frustratingly tedious that the desire to see them is lost fairly soon.

Graphically the game also misses out on an opportunity to impress. The game is played from the view of the cockpit with the locations



JUMPING FLASH

Playstation
Sony Computer
Entertainment
UK release Price
TBA

The mysterious "Aloha" has swiped some chunks from your planet and it's up to you to retrieve them! With the aid of your Rabbit Rocket ship you must release each of the 18 pieces of land from the clutches of Aloha's octopoid minions.

Going for an entirely original approach to the tired platform genre Sony have released the worlds only first-person perspective platform game. Set over six stages with three levels per stage you must guide your rabbit ship around the 3D environments collecting the carrot shaped pods before making your way to the exit. Obstacles come in the way of various animals and other nasties and some reasonably tricky puzzles to figure out. Falling off the edge of the world isn't advisable either.

Each level is portrayed in polygons and is quite impressive to look at. Platforms float in the air and buildings and trees tower above you, and all can be used as a launchpad for your little rabbit ship. A double press of the jump button sends you zooming into the sky at which point your viewpoint switches down between your feet enabling you to glide to safety. Cannons are part of your ship's systems enabling you to see off any of Aloha's minions that wander too near and take on the huge end of level bosses that await you. Power ups can also be collected to boost your abilities and vary from smart bombs to invulnerability and time freeze.

The graphics and sound on this game are both excellent with some stunning levels awaiting you in the later stages. The game is fun to look at and the soundtrack and spot effects add to this. What can I say, it looks amazing.

The only gripe to be had with this stunning piece of software is its size. With only eighteen levels to contend with of which six are end of level bosses, completion time may well be a lot sooner than you think. Maybe a title for video game novices or young children but still excellent fun to play.

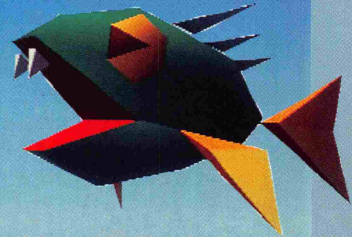
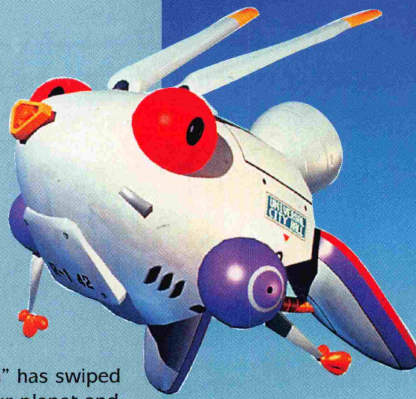
A terrific, enjoyable game flawed by being a bit too small. A good showcase for what their machine can do plus an entirely original angle to an ancient genre. Almost a classic.



and enemy mecha being constructed from polygons. Unfortunately the locations are very sparse and fairly unconvincing while the enemy mechs move so fast it's quite hard to get a good look at them. As mentioned before, even the computer generated animation sequences are a bit of a disappointment as they tend to lurch and jump quite a bit which is quite unnecessary. Sound affects and music are okay but they tended to be drowned out in the overall package.

This is a prime example of how not to go about writing a game. The gameplay is repetitive and boring and even the video sequences are badly done and jerky. Not recommended, even for diehard fans.

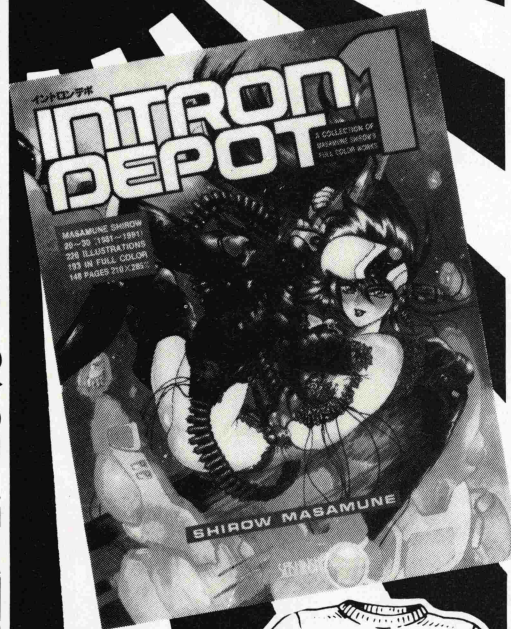
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MAGAZINES

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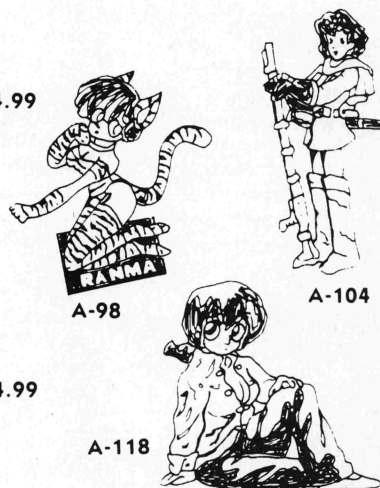
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INCOMING

OCTOBER 1995

Our industry source tells you what to look for on the shelves in the UK and USA

MANGA

ACADEMY COMICS LTD

ROBOTECH WARRIORS : TERROR MAKER GN
ROBOTECH II : SENTINELS BOOK III #22
ROBOTECH : 1996 COMIC CALENDAR
ROBOTCH : ACADEMY BLUES #3

ANTARCTIC PRESS

This company specialises in 'dojinshi' or non-professional (fan) manga, and publish a diverse range of manga titles.

NINJA HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK '95 by Various : the seventh Yearbook from that wacky Ninja High School features a wide range of artists and stories.
GOJIN #4 by Takizawa & Kondo : A dead alien returns to reclaim his bones - now being sold in a Chinese pharmacy!
SILBUSTER#11 by Ikkou Shahara : The 'very odd babes in giant battlesuits' tale continues!
SATINLESS STEEL ARMADILLO BY RYUKIHEI : A charming fantasy tale with all the right ingredients - handsome exiled princes, dragons, magic, two attractive young sisters - and, of course, an horrendously evil nemesis.
VAMPIRE MIYU #1 by Narumi Kakinouchi : Miyu, the last in a line of noble vampires, hunts those who would harm mankind.
AMAZING STRIP GN #1 by Ippongi Bang : Collects the first 5 US issues into one handy graphic novel. **Mature readers only.**

ARGO PRESS

STARBLAZERS #2 by Tim Eldred & Studio Go!

CPM COMICS

CYBER CITY PART TWO #1 by Tim Eldred and Studio Go! Based on the animated video available in the UK from Manga Entertainment and the USA from CPM.
PROJECT A-KO : VERSUS #1 by John Ott and Studio Go!

DARK HORSE COMICS

You can always be assured of quality releases from this company, and a growing commitment to publishing manga.
GUNSMITH CATS #6 by Kenichi Sonoda : Hugely enjoyable tale of two gun loviin' gals. **Recommended.**
DIRTY PAIR : FATAL BUT NOT SERIOUS #4 by Adam Warren : Full scale mayhem in the latest offering from the Dirty Pair - true to form, the Pair find themselves in the midst of a fan convention gone wrong, with the local sun about to go supernova!
GODZILLA #5 by Stradley etc : US treatment of the King of the Monsters
LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH #7

by Otomo and Nagayasu:

Recommended.

3 X 3 EYES #1 by Yuzo Takada : Pai and Yakumo return at last in Takada's wild tale of immortality and evil.

Recommended.

GHOST IN THE SHELL #8 by Masamune Shirow : Don't miss the dramatic final chapter in Shirow's cyber extravaganza. **Recommended.**

DRACULINA PUBLISHING

ORIENTAL CINEMA #8 : Complete coverage and filmography of Japan's SF shows on film and television - many large rubber monsters.

EROS COMICS

This company release Japanese erotic comic - bear in mind, this is very much a 'Mature Readers' publisher.

PRINCESS OF DARKNESS #2 by Yuichiro Tanuma

TEMPTATION #3 by Hiroyuki Utatane

GRAPHIC VISIONS

A relatively new company, they tend to specialise in more 'adult' manga, and US adaptations of manga.

SOL BIANCA VOL. 1 #3 by Greenfield and Reyes : Yet another American version of an original anime series; the video is available in the US from A.D. Vision and the U.K. from Kiseki.

MANGA PUBLISHING

MANGA MANIA #28 by various : news, reviews and manga series.

MANGAJIN

MANGAJIN #50 : this issue examines gambling in Japan, plus the usual range of language tutorials and features.

MARVEL COMICS

AKIRA #36 by Katsuhiro Otomo : The final volume of Akira sees print, and we will, at last, see the conclusion to this seminal tale.

VEROTIK

DEVILMAN #5 by Go Nagai.

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

This company are not afraid to take chances, with offerings ranging from shojo (girls') manga, political manga, light hearted comedy and more.

MAISON IKKOKU PART 4 #10 by Rumiko Takahashi : The endless frustrations of Yusaku continue - no matter what he does, he's always misunderstood!
MANGA VIZION VOL 1 #8 : More assorted manga tales in this successful anthology book.

MERMAID'S SCAR GN by Rumiko Takahashi.
RIOT #1 by Satoshi Shiki : When a reckless boy tries to steal the priceless text known as 'Riot' he is mortally wounded by its beautiful guardian Axel - but when 'Riot' offers to save him if he looks after Axel, he thinks he's got

a bargain - but has he?

BIO BOOSTER ARMOUR GUYVER PART 3 #7 by Yoshiaki Takaya.

NAUSICAA PART 5 #4 by Hayao Miyazaki. **Recommended.**

RETURN OF LUM PART 2 #3 by Rumiko Takahashi.

SANCTUARY PART 4 #3 by Fumimura and Ikegami.

X-1999 #6 by Clamp

ANIMERICA VOL 3 #10 : An indepth look at the works of Yuzo Takada, known for 3 x 3 Eyes and Catgirl Nuku-Nuku, among others.

MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL PERFECT COLLECTION GN by Kazuya Kudo and Ryoichi Ikegami : One of the first manga available in the West is finally available again, and is a good example of the Japanese psychic schoolgirl genre.

BATTLE ANGEL ALITA PART 5 #4 by Yukito Kishiro.

RANMA HALF PART 4 #10 by Rumiko Takahashi : One of Ranma's nightmares has finally come true - he's been chosen to be the judge in a cooking competition in which Akane is taking part! Will he manage to escape without Food Poisoning?

Recommended.

ANIME US RELEASES

A.D. VISION

BURN UP! Dubbed
MAPS EPISODES 3 & 4 Subtitled

ANIME 18

LA BLUE GIRL VOL 2. Subtitled.
Adult Material.

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT INC

ANGEL COP VOL. 4. Dubbed.
MACROSS II CD-ROM : An interactive adventure set in the world of Macross II which uses footage from the animation to enhance the game.
MACROSS II. Dubbed/subtitled.
GAINT ROBO VOL. 4. Dubbed. This classy retro series finally examines the origins of Giant Robo.

PIONEER

ARMITAGE III VOL 3. Dubbed/subtitled. The murders of 'third' robots continue, while a wave of indiscriminate bombings sweep Mars.
Recommended.

EL HAZARD EPISODE 1.

Dubbed/subtitled. Makoto was an ordinary high school student until he was swept into an alternate dimension where he is the spitting image of its ruler's ... sister!
HAKKENDEN VOL 1. Dubbed/subtitled.

RENEGADE

STREETFIGHTER II : The Movie.
The long awaited anime version of the incredibly popular game should go a long way towards erasing the memory of the Van Damme version. A polished and exciting anime - heavy on well choreographed fight scenes and short on plot (as it should be!) Available in General and Uncut versions.

SOFTCEL PICTURES

For adult viewers.

DRAGON PINK VOL 3. Subtitled. Available in General and Uncut versions.

ANGEL OF DARKNESS VOL 2.

Subtitled. Available in General and Uncut versions.

SOFTWARE SCULPTORS

METAL FIGHTER MIKU EPISODES 4 & 5. Subtitled.

STREAMLINE

8 MAN AFTER PERFECT COLLECTION. Dubbed. Four episodes on one videotape.

US MANGA CORPS

AKAI HAYATE VOL 2. Subtitled.

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

OGRE SLAYER. Dubbed. Not quite human. Not quite inhuman. The haunting tale of a nameless boy who wanders the earth disposing of ogres and other supernatural beasts.

RANMA HALF : FOWL PLAY. Dubbed. Ranma goes up against Mousse, the shortsighted devotee of Shampoo who happens to turn into a goose when doused in cold water!
Recommended.

UK RELEASES

Please note that as the BBFC sometimes delays titles, this schedule may be subject to change.

ANIME PROJECTS

SUPER DEFORMED DOUBLE FEATURE. Subtitled. One of the hits of AUKcon 94, this tape features two comic SD adventures, one featuring a Wacky Races-type contest ending in AP's hometown of Bangor! (well, not really, but the name's the same ...)

Recommended.

URUSEI YATSURA TV EPISODES VOL 8. Subtitled. More adventures of the electrifying Lum.

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS VOL 6. Dubbed.

KISEKI FILMS

SOL BIANCA VOL 1 : Subtitled. Five girls, one very unusual spaceship, a boy stowaway and the Galaxy's greatest treasure.

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT LTD

ANGEL COP VOL 6. Dubbed. The final instalment in this frenetic series, as the psychic battle escalates out of control.

MADDOX - 01. Dubbed. One guy who daren't be late for his date - and one big hunk of heavy metal in his way!
ORGUSS 02 VOL 3. Dubbed. The saga of the devastators continues. Streetfighter II the Movie. Dubbed. Possibly the most anticipated anime release this year should finally be available in October - expect lots of hype and advertising but don't let this put you off seeing it (if you like this sort of thing!) **Recommended**

PIONEER

Following September's Tenchi Muyo Special and Kishin Heidan releases, Pioneer plan nothing further until January 96.

WESTERN CONNECTION

HUMMINGBIRDS, DEVIL HUNTER YOKO and DARKSIDE BLUES are all coming - but as yet we have no firm dates. Watch for more news!



TALL STORIES

DODEKAIN 8 issue series, issue 1 Nov 94 - issue 8 June 95, b/w. Story & art : Masayuki Fujihara. Antarctic Press, \$2.95 (US)

Deju vu time. The year is 199X. Earth faces invasion by the evil Zogelian Empire, using a variety of giant reject Toho monsters to smash mankind's resistance (and a sizeable amount of his property at the same time). The future looks bleak. Enter mankind's last hope, mad scientist Dr. G's secret weapon : DODEKAIN!

Dodekain is a giant robot. No, make that a *Giant* robot. 15,000 miles tall and weighing in at 130 septillion 650 quintillion tons(!), it is very, very big indeed. In time honoured anime/manga tradition the control of this super weapon falls on the shoulders of a young boy, Takuma Ippongi. The problem is, Takuma is a clumsy, impulsive nerd who now controls a robot bigger than the Earth! Somehow, the outlook for mankind just got bleaker ...

DODEKAIN (which incidentally means a giant) is a simple, light parody of a much loved genre - the Japanese giant warrior robot shows. As such it pushes all the right buttons, affectionately mocking such cliches as shouting the name of a weapon before using it ("explosive light extinction cannon!"). Amusing rather than hilarious, as with any parody how funny you find it will depend on your familiarity with the source material it lampoons. There are some nice touches in the translation. I particularly liked the name of the Zogelian flagship : The Crashing Boar! On the negative side, though it helped to convey Takuma's country bumpkin character, I soon found his Popeye-

like dialogue irritating to read ("Ya evil bastard, ya really screwed up th'Earth!"). Incidentally his name is a tip of the hat to another of Antarctic Press' manga artists, Ippongi Bang, who also designed one of the characters who crops up in issue 5 of DODEKAIN.

Masayuki Fujihara's artwork is rather rough, but pleasing, with a suitably early 70s feel to it. Some of his layouts are messy and confusing, though, making the book hard on the eyes in places. It also suffers from a common problem with Antarctic's translated manga ; crude retouching and clumsy sound-effect lettering. While on the subject of lettering, the idea of using a highly stylised typeface for the Zogelian dialogue is a good one, let down by the actual typeface chosen which is particularly ugly and really doesn't enhance the look of the book at all. A pity the same care hasn't gone into this aspect of Antarctic's presentation as went into the excellent computer coloured covers, which really lure you into picking up the book for a closer look.

Niggly faults aside, this is a fun read and well worth checking out if, like me, you can't resist the hyperbole of those classic robot shows. "SUPER LIGHT SPEED PUNCH!!"

If you can't track DODEKAIN down in your local comic shop, comic mart or mail order service, back issues of most Antarctic Press titles are available from the publishers; check out the ad with ordering details in any of their titles, or write to Antarctic Press, 7272 Wurzbach Suite #204, San Antonio, TX 78240, USA.

STEVE KYTE



URBAN TERROR

DOMU

Writer/artist : Katsuhiko Otomo. B/W, 229 pp, published (US) Dark Horse in three parts, (UK) Mandarin as single volume graphic novel.

This is one of the best stories about paranormal powers ever written. It's set in contemporary blue-collar Japan, land of soulless housing estates, gossiping neighbours, underachievers struggling to survive in a pressured society, and families ignoring their children and dumping their old people. One of the pivotal figures of DOMU is old man Cho, whose family simply upped and went, leaving him alone in a bleak highrise flat. Everyone thinks Cho is just a harmless old soul. Objects disappear, but then objects disappear all the time - haven't you ever wondered where that pen, that book, that ring got to? Even when someone commits suicide, no-one is too surprised. Then the strange events start to multiply, and the police get more and more involved as more people die. Baffled and appalled by events he can't explain, one young detective is forced to the conclusion that Cho is the key. But Cho is simply one side of the story; like the little man in the weathervane, he is unable to escape the constant company of Etsuko, six years old and a psychic of terrifying powers, who takes up her station on the other arm of the weathervane and struggles with the dogged insistence of childhood to keep Cho's forces of chaos in some kind of equilibrium with the everyday, established order. The old man reverts to the worst excesses of neglected childhood. People die just so that he can have things he wants. The despair and hopelessness of life is magnified

by his sneaking, sly taunts, plucked straight from his victims' heads, and escalates towards a bloody massacre. The little girl, knowing that this is bad behaviour, acts at first to warn him, then to stop him, and finally, realising that no-one else has the ability or the will to control him, to put a stop to him once and for all.

The artwork is breathtaking. The simplicity and directness with which Otomo depicts urban life makes the superb draughtsmanship and page planning look deceptively straightforward, but the placing and content of every frame is carefully calculated and its effect on the pace and timing of events precisely defined. The writing is stripped down to the barest bones, allowing the pictures to carry most of the story. How little of what we say matters, or is heard at all, strikes home. In particular, the way we adults ignore children, or bend what they say to fit our own observed truth, is an important element of the story. The superb translation by Dana Lewis and Toren Smith respects the brevity of Otomo's writing, compressing a wealth of meaning into as few words as possible, and is supported by Tomoko Saito's exemplary retouching.

AKIRA it most certainly is not. So why won't it bore you? Why should you buy it? Because there hasn't been this gripping a duel between good and evil since the movie version of THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS. Because there's more to sf than spaceships and cyberfutures. Because comics aren't just for kids, and DOMU proves it.

HELEN MCCARTHY

GUNSMITH CATS #3

Story & Art: Kenichi Sonoda
Dark Horse Comics, 10 issue
series, B/W, \$2.50 (US)

Hard to find much to complain about here; a sparkling blend of clean, crisp artwork, vivid characters, superb action and a nice mix of drama and wacky humour. Sonoda's fetish for meticulous detail of guns'n'cars never gets in the way of the story but instead helps root it firmly in reality, even for folks like myself who know nothing about either subject. The episodic structure of the original manga fits the US comic format like a driving glove (given Sonoda's well known love of US culture, perhaps this was intentional, to ease its passage to the West?) and the usual sympathetic translation and retouch work by Studio Proteus round out the package nicely. Of its type, it's damn near perfect.

Issue 3 sees the return of superbitch Bonnie and her brother Clyde (oh dear!). Bonnie has substantial portions of her anatomy missing as a result of her previous encounter with Rally and Minnie May (issue #1) and is, not surprisingly, somewhat peeved with them. It's pay-back time!

On a side note, one aspect that particularly impresses me about the Dark Horse manga line is the striking covers, blessedly free of the typographical clutter of most comics. Along with Antarctic Press, they realise that when it comes to covers, pictures speak louder than words. Would that more companies got the message.

STEVE KYTE

THE LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH #4

Sory: Katsuhiko Otomo. Art:
Takaumi Nagayasu. Dark Horse
Comics 8 issue series b/w \$2.50
(US)

Issue four brings us to the halfway stage in this saga of a mother searching for her family in a post-nuclear holocaust wasteland - familiar territory for AKIRA creator Katsuhiko Otomo, here sticking to the role of writer and leaving the artwork to Takumi Nagayasu, whose style is incredibly similar to Otomo's. The artwork is beautiful and the attention to detail creates a solid and believable (if overly familiar) MAD MAX style world; but, alas, it's hard to care much for any of the characters and the story isn't really going anywhere. Sarah herself is an enigmatic, rather cold and distant character spending much of her time as a silent observer of events, a bit like Clint Eastwood's 'Man With No Name'. Like him, when she is galvanized into action somebody

usually ends up on the wrong end of her fist or a bullet. Strangely, she only seems to be seeking her children, not her husband, who was last seen luring armed guards away from them. This is a good example of how slower-paced manga are ill served by forcing them into the format of standard US comics; whole issues go by with little happening. A complete graphic novel release would have been preferable. As it is, with only four issues to go, the story badly needs to pick up speed and grab its audience.
STEVE KYTE

STAINLESS STEEL ARMADILLO #3.

Story & art : Ryukihei. Antarctic
Press. 6 issue series, B/W,
\$2.95 (US)

Issue #1 of this sword and sorcery saga proved to be a big hit for Antarctic Press: it was the fourth highest selling book in the company's 10 year history and their second best selling manga title (after GOLDEN WARRIOR ICZER ONE), which just goes to prove that you can't go wrong with cute babes and even cuter dragons. Or can you?

Plenty of action (most of it pretty violent), cute heroines who get their kit off at regular intervals and one or two original touches (such as the soldiers who 'wear' their dragon mounts like armour) doesn't compensate for a very formula-bound RPG plot, which in three issues hasn't gone very far.

Two sisters, keepers of ancient magical books, meet a deposed who can harness the powers of one of the books, and join forces to unleash the magic and defy the Evil King. His days are obviously numbered.

The weak story isn't helped by the translation which seems unsure how to pitch the dialogue. As a result we veer from "Yea, verily, your father Targst Badam was a mighty warrior ..." to "Hey, get a grip!", the latter yelled by a soldier to his writhing dragon whose arm has just been hacked off! I'm sure the poor creature would if it could! Still, the chances are this wasn't exactly deathless prose in the original Japanese.

The artwork makes up for a lot. It's very attractive, with nicely composed pages and good design work; but I still feel it lacks that something special to really make it stand out from the vast range of RPG manga floating around.

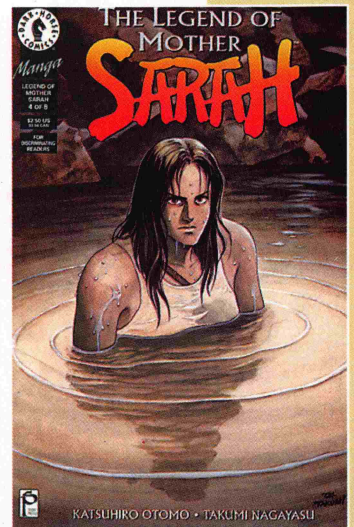
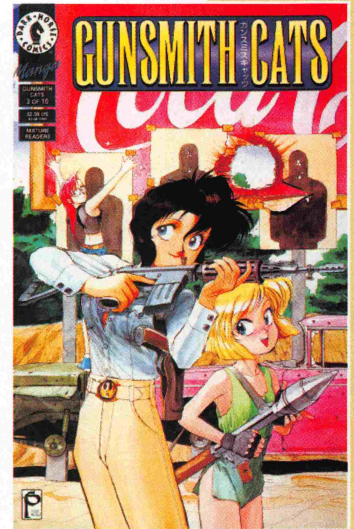
Still, it does have dragons aplenty and for some that will be recommendation enough ... what it doesn't have (so far) are any armadillos, stainless steel or otherwise. Shame really.

STEVE KYTE

A.M. WORKS

is another new fan-founded imprint, this time from the USA. Dean Hsieh and Will Allison have managed to get distribution so you'll be able to order their titles from any comics retailer. They're both intriguing new talents, having managed the difficult feat of displaying their manga influences without drowning their own identities and ending up as second-rate clones of their favourite artists. Both have confident, intelligent panel layouts and pay attention to detail without being fussy. In ATHENA, Hsieh asks what an unemployed Goddess might do in the future; I asked the same question for my entry in the 1990 Worldcon masquerade, and Hsieh has come up with the same answer I did; she fronts a rock band, of course. This isn't why I like his story, though; it's the originality, the pace and the attitude that make ATHENA fun. Lucky the poster chain folded, though, or his logo might have got him into trouble. As for Allison's PERVERT CLUB, what can I say? Schoolgirls from Hell dominated by the Dark Forces were never so much fun before, as nerd Malcolm Davis (I had a boyfriend called Malcolm Davis - have these guys been spying on me or something?) learns that while being true to yourself is all very well, there are limits to society's tolerance of people who steal their sister's panties. ATHENA is bimonthly commencing November 1995, PERVERT CLUB bimonthly commencing December 1995.

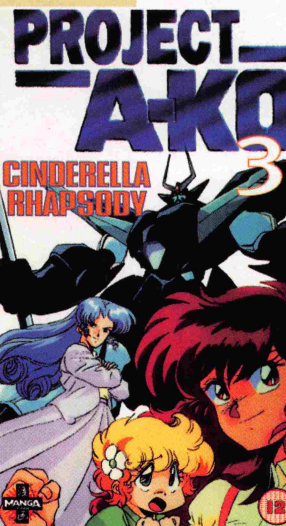
HELEN MCCARTHY



Top left:
Pervert Club
Bottom Left:
Athena

NOTE : issues reviewed are not necessarily the most recent - check INCOMING for latest release details





VIDEO SCAN

U.K. RELEASES

HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN Part III

Manga Video, MANV 1099.
30 mins approx. Cert 12.
English dubbed

It's been a long time coming - almost two years since part II hit the video shelves; so is it worth the wait...

Well first off all you'd better dust off your old copies of this epic saga. Just because there's been a gap between episodes doesn't mean that you can just jump in unprepared. No sireee; no way. Arslan is heroic fantasy with meat; it has considerably more depth than the average sword swinging yarn.

It's also pleasing to remember that a lot of attention has been given to Arslan's design. Where occasional realism blends in effectively with the gentle stylistic lines of 'soft shojo', assisting that feel for a far off place, a distant land where Arabic minarets co-exist with galleons and medieval castles. In fact the only real let down is the voice acting, which when compared with some of Manga's other recent releases is woefully wooden and unfeeling.

This third episode sees both sides preparing for the inevitable war to come. The rampaging Lusitanians need to end the campaign quickly and are prepared to take substantial risks to do so, whilst the mixing of races and heroes in young prince Arslan's camp is causing some tension. At all times you're reminded that this war is a battle of wills and beliefs, but don't worry the action set pieces and armed conflicts are all very well handled; managing successfully to inject swash-buckling heroics into fairly realistic battles.

Though not perfect, this a superior example of its genre and should be welcomed with open arms by fans of the first two episodes.

ROBERT LYN DAVIES

ANGEL COP - Part 5

Manga Video, MANV 1101,
25 mins approx. Cert 18.
English dubbed

Anyone expecting a plot in Angel Cop 5 - Wrath of the Empire is going to be severely disappointed. Of course, not many people expect a story from this series in the first place...

With half the SSF and the psychic vigilante Freya dead, Angel, Asura, and Raiden are holed up in the research facility with just about every SWAT team in Japan trying to turn them into Swiss cheese. Raiden tools up and trundles outside to delete half the army single-handed, and Dr Ichihara froths and raves at his control boards in best B-movie mad scientist tradition. In the distance, however, a burning ship heads towards the coast, carrying the third and most dangerous Hunter - Lucifer, probably the most destructive psionic since Tetsuo Shima, despite her kinky basque and furs.

Raiden goes out to fight Lucifer, and battle ensues. In fact, battle has been ensuing since the beginning of the video: Angel Cop 5 is simply a twenty-five minute fight sequence. Exponential dialogue takes up no more than about five minutes of running time. That said, the video doesn't set out to do anything else but show one almighty punch-up, and it does it very well. The animation is well up to par, beating many newer productions hands down, and it's all exciting and a lot of fun (especially the 'headless gunman' sequence). There's also the very satisfying sight of Lucifer finally taking some real hits.

Angel Cop is simplistic, violent, and gruesome - and for anyone sick of the Sailor Moons and Ah! My Goddesses of this world, a real tonic.

PETER J EVANS

PROJECT A-KO 2: PLOT OF THE DAITOKUJI FINANCIAL GROUP

Manga Video, MANV 1089,
45 mins approx, Cert 12.
English dubbed

ALIENS remade ALIEN with considerable success because a new ingredient - mother love - was introduced to the mix; A-KO 2 remakes A-KO with slightly less success because the mix is pretty much as before. Not that this is a serious complaint; you're still getting a fast-paced, funny romp with no holds barred and no observable connection with reality. It's just that the first film was a groundbreaker, and

after the first time nothing has quite the same impact. Once again B-Ko is determined to show herself on A-Ko for past humiliations and secure the affections of C-Ko. This time she designs a new ultimate weapon, but Daddy - a man whose every action shows that B-Ko really is a chip off the old block - steals it for his own nefarious purposes. Meanwhile Captain Napolipolita and D have done their best to integrate into human society, but they're homesick, and they still haven't quite given up hope of getting Princess C-Ko back to their own planet. While A-Ko and B-Ko slug it out for C-Ko, and Daitokujii Senior plots to sell his daughter's mecha to the government, every nation in the world has spies aboard the alien-ship-turned leisure-complex, just waiting to steal their superior technology. There are some fabulous moments, like Hikaru Daitokujii's appearance in a risqué copy of his little girl's battle-armor, Ayumi-sensei's session at the pool and the various cameo appearances included for otaku to spot. Manga Video have wisely taken over the Central Park Media dub, which is very well done, despite the usual Western problem of voice actresses too old for their roles. (Let's be fair, though - no-one could ever replace the sublimely dotty voice created by Michie Tomizawa for the original Japanese C-Ko.) RANMA 1/2 dub fans should listen out for the voice of the US Ranma-chan, Venus Terzo. This tape also provides a bonus in the shape of CPM's subtitled edits of various Japanese music videos, trailers and adverts for the video. Worth adding to your collection? Yes. As good as PROJECT A-KO? No, not really.

HELEN MCCARTHY

PROJECT A-KO 3: CINDERELLA RHAPSODY

Manga Video, MANV 1097,
56 mins approx, cert 12.
English dubbed

From the first frame of the gorgeous pre-credit sequence it's obvious that this is something special. Designed by Yasuomi Umetsu (a name familiar from many distinguished works including MEGA-ZONE 23 Part 2 and the sublime Presence segment of ROBOT CARNIVAL), the sepia-toned scenes in a smoky pool hall show C-Ko as she likes to see herself - confident, coordinated, in control, a winner. But it's all a dream, and in the real world the small squeaky one faces a problem known to many a teenage girl. What happens when your best friend starts to fancy boys but you're just not ready yet? How will your friendship change? And what happens when boys start taking an interest in you? CINDERELLA RHAPSODY encapsulates that period of

change, when all at once clothes, looks and men assume a huge importance and old friends can be neglected and left behind. Since this is PROJECT A-KO, it encapsulates it in comic mayhem, but the almost elegaic end-of-summer atmosphere is still there, underlying the laughs and counterpointed by a music score which matches the mood of each frame to perfection. The element of romance in this story comes in the dark, taciturn shape of biker Kei. A-Ko fancies him something rotten, and gets herself a part-time job in a burger bar to pay for the dress of her dreams, in which she's sure she will win his heart at the grand party to celebrate the opening of the leisure complex on the aliens' starship. B-Ko, once again, has to have what A-Ko wants, so she's after Kei too. But Kei himself has already given his heart - to someone who can't stand him - and at the party the whole mess erupts into violence on the usual epic scale as A-Ko and B-Ko slug it out. The Mayor calls out the citizen's defence group, and Ayumi-sensei and her fellow citizens pitch in with an assortment of giant robots, body armour and deadly weaponry that should raise smiles and bring back memories among fans of sentai shows and older anime. (Watch out for other affectionate tributes in the dress shop sequence where A-Ko changes into a variety of outfits, including a Umetsu minstrel ensemble that wouldn't look out of place in any New Romantic revival club, and slightly less suitable Gojira and King Ghidorah suits!) But at the end of the evening, it's C-Ko who gets what she wants, as the old alliance is restored and she and A-Ko walk home together. Another good Central Park Media dub is a bonus. In fact, the only disappointment is the end credit sequence, which repeats the images from the end credits for PROJECT A-KO 2, instead of using the original Japanese black-screen credits interspersed with more seductive Umetsu sepia images, and ending with a terrific full-colour shot of our heroines mugging for the camera. This is a return to the heights of the A-KO movie; get it or regret it.

HELEN MCCARTHY

TENCHI MUYO SPECIAL THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CARNIVAL

Pioneer, PIO 10012,
45 mins approx. Cert 12, ,
English dubbed

I got to review this because our revered Editor brought a cuddly Ryo-oh-ki home from California and thinks its cute presence has seriously compromised her objectivity towards TENCHI MUYO. A bit of

saucy talk about lovemaking, idealised nudity and embarrassing materialisation in the bathroom earned this its 12, but it's the same innocent fun as in the first three volumes, a light-hearted, bouncy continuation of the feelgood atmosphere. And that's the problem. Like the KEKKOU KAMEN tape reviewed below, it's very much the mixture as before. Aeka and Ryoko are now fighting for first place in Tenchi's life, rather than for ancient family wrongs; but Sasami is still being as cute as anything, Mihoshi is still several photons short of even the nucleus of a braincell, Ryo-oh-ki is still carrot crazy and it's all sweet and familiar. The story doesn't really go anywhere - it's a string of random events, like Mihoshi's trip to report back to her superior and Wasshu's mass-production of Ryo-oh-ki clone crystals. Many of the story threads are left dangling (to be pursued later?) but while some events have consequences, like the household's running out of carrots and the Masaki home being levelled, they don't seem to be leading anywhere in particular, least of all to a carnival, which is never mentioned after the title. But since most TENCHI MUYO fans don't want this hugely popular OAV series to end, that's sure to be fine by them. The art and design are lovely, the music fun and the production standards as high as ever. It'll tide eager Tenchiites over until more OAVs hit these shores, but it certainly won't stem the flood of Tenchi fever.

RORY DONNELLY

KISHIN HEIDAN Vol 3 KISHIN VS PANZER KNIGHT PARTS 1 & 2

Pioneer, PIO 10013,
61 mins approx., Cert PG,
English dubbed

Two episodes of the series inspired by the 30s and 40s on one tape, introducing the mighty Panzer Knight, the Nazis' version of a giant robot. It looks magnificent, like a moving statue of a Norse god - but then they always did have all the best uniforms. The complex plot is going even deeper into alternative-history territory as we meet the great scientist Albert (Einstein), who has just developed a new defence bomb and scribbles his Theory of Relativity on a map of Europe for his young Kishin Corps protegee Bill and Maria Braun. Meanwhile the Nazis unveil another secret weapon in the sleek shape of Hans Lengel, "the Fuhrer's backscratcher", a lilac-haired, power-shouldered Adonis who is a prime example of what happens to bad bishonen if and when they grow up. The slow buildup of character detail works to good effect as we see unexpected facets in our heroes and their foes - Bareho gets a sur-

prise appearance as a dancer in a party scene, and Rinmei is seen to be more than a ruthless tool of Colonel Shinkai. The production standards of the first two tapes are maintained, but the plot, taken from Masaki Yamada's sf novel, is so complicated that you'll have to concentrate or you'll lose the thread completely. Don't buy this tape until you've watched the first **two!**

HELEN MCCARTHY

KISHIN HEIDAN Vol 4 STORMING THE BASE OF THE ALIEN FOE & YOUTH TO THE RESCUE

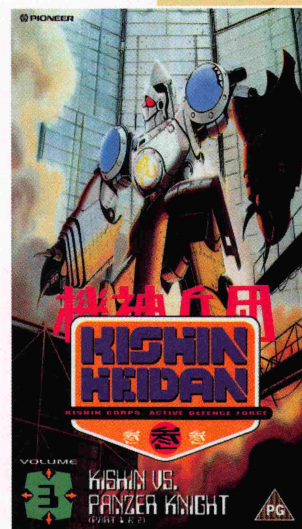
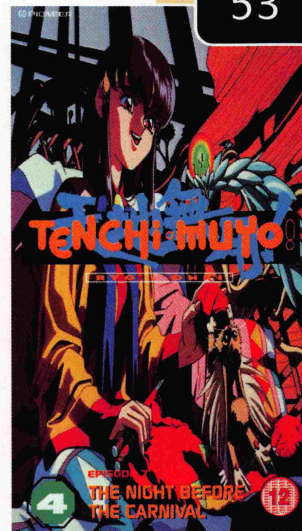
Pioneer, PIO 10014,
60 mins approx., Cert PG
English dubbed

The last volume of this complex story has to tie up a number of loose ends before it can reach the optimistic final shot. One of these comes near to finishing off our hero as one of the band of orphaned kids with whom Taishi used to live comes looking for revenge and snatches the fourth Kishin module to sell to the Kanto Army. The friction between Lengel and Shinkai worsens and the Colonel has plans of his own to ensure it isn't Hitler who rules the world. Meanwhile in America, the death of President Franklin Roosevelt means that there is nothing to stop the USAF dropping Albert's new bomb on the Nazis' secret base. Can the Kishin Corps fight its way past the Panzer Knight, retrieve their stolen module and get Taishi's Kishin operational in time to prevent a terrible alliance between Nazis and aliens bringing a battalion of Panzer Knights online and sealing the fate of the world? The final episode is packed with battle action, from fistfights to swordfights, from Nazi supermen in giant armour to aliens in Messerschmidts, and the titanic struggle between three of the Kishin Corps and the Panzer Knight piloted by the Colonel is the final setpiece. The atmosphere of the Saturday morning cinema serials of the Thirties and Forties is strongly maintained, with a number of shots referring to classic films and news footage of the period. The English dub is to Ocean Studios' usual standard, with the main regret being the loss of one of our favourite seiyuu, the mighty Norio Wakamoto, who plays the Colonel on the Japanese version - a very good reason to buy the laserdisc if and when it comes out in the UK.

HELEN MCCARTHY

NEW DOMINION TANK POLICE Part 5 (Act 10)

Manga Video, MANV 1095,
30 mins approx. Cert 12.





English dubbed

All things must come to an end, both good and bad. This latest Dominion series has been a bit of a mixed bag - better than the first attempt, but probably not as good as it could have been...

The purpose of the Dai Nippon Giken plot is finally revealed, as Coldsman prepares the way for a rival corporation to step in and take control of the leaderless megacorp. His plans are marred by the news that Mayor Weatherby is still alive, so he sends two of his unmanned attack mecha to rectify the situation.

Brenten and the tank police surround the hospital and attempt to fend off the inevitable attack, while Al and Leona head off in search of the mechs' control station. They find the signal emanating from the site of a foreign embassy, and are forbidden to take any action - not something guaranteed to put Leona in the best of moods!. She doesn't have to wait long, though: Brenten succeeds in erasing the attack mechs, and Coldsman comes out shooting, wounding Al and heading off to the airport. Can Leona catch up with him before her driver keels over from blood loss? What do you think?

As one would expect, the current situation is neatly rounded up while not actually changing anything. Even the potential relationship between Al and Leona remains just as potential at the end of the series as it was at the start, and even our last glimpse of the Pumas is simply an edit from part 9. Given the previous episodes Dominion 10 just about lives up to expectations, but by no means exceeds them. One for the completists.

PETER J EVANS

KEKKOU KAMEN VOL 2

East2West, E2W 1004,
45 mins approx, Cert 18,
English dubbed.

Two more adventures of Go Nagai's naked avenger, once again translated with tongue firmly in cheek by Jonathan Clements and overacted with gusto by a deranged cast. Particular mention must go to the voice actor for the second of Kekkou's adversaries, a ninja with a Polaroid fixation and a severe case of Sean Conneryitis, afflicting both his voice and his ponytail. His predecessor is an android schoolgirl devised by Principal Tochiz and Professor Ben to give their naked nemesis her ultimate challenge, and the actionsequences in this section are almost seriously good; but nothing is serious about KEKKOU KAMEN for long. The only problem

with this tape is that the first one was so fresh, funny and completely over the top that it's a hard act to follow; more of the same is the solution adopted, and while it's still a terrific piece of comic parody, it can't have quite the same impact. But don't miss it on that account - Red Dwarf is still almost as funny on the fourth repeat, and these new adventures of KK are nearly as riotous as the first lot. Don't miss the singalong subtitles for the deliberately rhymed-and-scanned song translations.

RORY DONNELLY

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS 4 REVENGE ROAD

Anime Projects AP095-010, cert PG, 30 mins, English dubbed

The episode without a Buma has Priss and the Knight Sabers pursuing a classic car enthusiast with a grudge against bikers, and demonstrates that Mackie is good for something apart from leering at the girls and driving the van - he's produced a superbike cobbled from bits and pieces, which conveniently just happens to be the only thing fast enough to catch JJ Gibson's souped-up cybercar and stop him from killing himself and his girlfriend Naomi. In the end, Priss saves the couple and Leon gets to stop the car in his usual subtle fashion after a chase sequence which is well up to BGC standards of excitement. In the end, it's a revenger's tragedy - the people most injured by Gibson's obsession are himself and the innocent and sensitive Naomi. The English dub is professionally executed although the sound mix still seems unbalanced to me - knocking the music way back takes away some of the crackling energy that the original BGC soundtrack gave to the series, and the songs suffer, despite committed performances from the English language singers. Still, BGC purists will already have this in Japanese, and those who don't care for subs shouldn't miss the chance to get this classic. At £12.99 it's pricier than some 30-minute tapes on the market, but you're paying for quality, and despite my own reservations about the sound mix I think it's a good buy.

HELEN MCCARTHY

OH MY GODDESS! Episode 4 EVERGREEN HOLY NIGHT

Anime Projects, AP095-009,
cert U, 29 mins, subtitled

Earlier episodes of this hugely popular hit series have sold well in Japan, the USA and the UK, and this will be no exception. Fujishima's

design is presented at its very best, with some classic images in the opening dream sequence and a high standard of animation throughout. There are those who find Belldandy's devotion to Keiichi distasteful or even subversive, but there's nothing wrong with a girl wanting to give up her day job and devote her life to her man, even if the day job is goddessing; and while nobody could accuse Belldandy of being terribly bright or forceful, she's sweet, kind-hearted and helpful and makes a change from the feminist heroines of anime like BUBBLEGUM CRISIS or BLACK MAGIC M-66. Even goddesses can be unsure of themselves. In this episode a series of wierd and destructive incidents indicate that bugs are spreading through a portal formed by Belldandy and Keiichi's physical proximity. Belldandy gets a call from her boss telling her it's time she came back to Heaven, and as word spreads like wildfire through Nekomi Tech that she and Keiichi are splitting up, Urd and Skuld decide to try and help their sister follow her heart. The episode ends on a cliffhanger, and you'll have to wait for episode 5, FOR THE LOVE OF GODDESS, for the resolution. The end titles are a lovely montage of Fujishima art, showcasing some of his most beautiful images. This is anime for old-fashioned romantics and its premise, that Love Conquers All but you have to suffer first, has been selling novels for far longer than tv and video have been around. OH MY GODDESS! is evidence that the sugar-coated magic of romance survives transplanting to new media and can appeal to a whole new generation of fans.

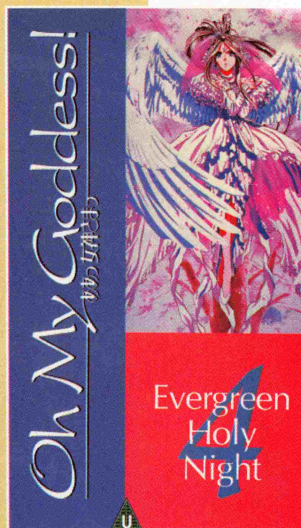
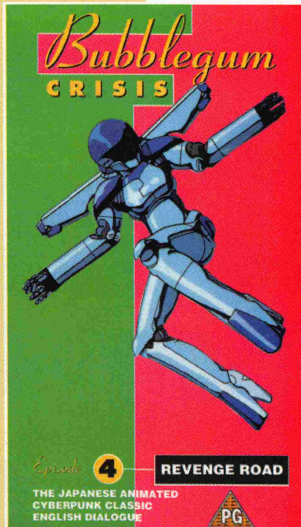
HELEN MCCARTHY

RETURN OF THE OVERFIEND 1-4

Kiseki Films, KIS 93043, Cert 18, 157 mins, English dubbed

The latest idea from Kiseki is a budget-priced, space-saving collection of all four episodes on one tape. You should be able to pick it up for around eleven quid. As for the review, what is there to say about the UROTSUKIDOJI saga that hasn't already been said? Even with the grosser parts of Caesar's semi-religious torture orgy and the various rape scenes removed, it will still upset and offend. That's what it's for - it should have DESIGNED TO SHOCK stamped across the front. But the ending suggests there may be a point to all this apart from exploitation, with Buju and Kyo-O heading for a meeting with Chojin and an attempt to find out what it's all about, and there are some seriously thoughtful moments in the last episode. Don't just write it off as gore-soaked smut, because you could be wrong.

RORY DONNELLY



ADVENTURE DUO 1-3

Kiseki Films, KIS 94045, cert 18, 126.00 mins, subtitled

It can't make its mind up if it's cyberadventure, zombie rape horror or soapy sex farce; now you've got all three episodes on one tape, again at a budget price, it ought to be easier to see what it's all about, but no way. Episode One has a Second World War computer re-activated and seriously deviating from its programming. Episode 2 gets the near-obligatory nuclear holocaust references out of the way. Episode 3 goes completely bonkers and turns into a sitcom with the King of Hell trying to get his son out of Midori's pants, his daughter trying to get into Norikazu's, and the school pervert blackmailing his music teacher into some strange techniques on the keyboard. As a sampler of most types of etchi (perky) video from teen-sex to demon rape it's pretty comprehensive. As a series it's completely senseless. As a bit of a laugh, it's good value. Just don't try and get it to make sense.

RORY DONNELLY

U.S.A. RELEASES

NOTE: You need NTSC playback equipment to play these tapes; many UK retailers and mail-order suppliers now offer dual-standard machines at reasonable prices to hire or buy.

MEGAZONE 23 - PART 1

Orion Home Video, Streamline Pictures Video Comics, 90913, unrated, 80 mins, English dubbed with English language closed captions

For those of you who have bought the Manga Video UK release of Megazone 23 Part 3, this gives you the chance to see the beginning of the story. ROBOTECH fans will probably already have it, in its edited and rewritten version as ROBOT-TECH THE MOVIE. It was made way back in 1985 but the animation, though technically dated, still looks fresh, and the design (overseen by LUPIN III veteran Noboru Furuse) is punchy and powerful in every respect. The characters, designed by Toshihiro Hirano of ICZER ONE fame with help from Yasuomi Umetsu, have lots of charm, though Mikimoto's idol singer Eve Tokimatsuri is the best of the bunch; the mecha are stunning, and the battle action holds its own with many flashier modern titles. The

story is a solid science fiction yarn in which man, having fought terrible wars and almost destroyed his world, seems to have reached a period of peace and stability; but the politicians and powerbrokers are deceiving the entire population, and the truth of life in 20th-century Tokyo is not in any way what it seems. Teenager Shogo is drawn into the web when a friend, asked to test a new experimental bike by his company, is casually murdered and his death covered up; but as he burrows deeper he begins to discover that the whole world is fiction. Toshihiro Hirano directs with style and verve, and the English language adaptation by Greg Snegoff and Carl Macek has believable, natural-sounding dialogue, with the Japanese songs left intact. Well worth getting, with the closed-caption subtitles a bonus.

HELEN MCCARTHY

WINDARIA

Streamline Pictures Video Comics, 90018, 95 mins approx, English dubbed

The release of this Harmony Gold production gives the West another chance to enjoy one of the great films of 1986. Despite the alterations to the story outlined in Chris Jackman's feature in this issue, the US edit of WINDARIA, here with some of the excised footage restored, is a treat. It's gorgeous to look at, with Mutsumi Inomata at her not inconsiderable best producing characters that are varied, attractive, and in some cases downright sexy, background paintings of sweeping grandeur and a real sense of the importance of nature in the story conveyed through the design and cinematography. Director Kunihiko Yuyama has paced his epic story well, and the six minutes of cuts don't break the flow. The allegorical and moral aspects of the story and its obviously fantasy-inspired setting have led some Western viewers to rate this as a childrens' film (indeed, its UK release was on the MY-TV label aimed at 5-7 year olds) but it's really too complex for the very young, and its uncompromising refusal to let any of the characters get away with anything may be upsetting for some kids. Indeed, the flow of retribution is what relates it most closely to real fairytales, those old, scary, Grimms and Perraults, with loss and terror and pain under their fantastically decorated surfaces. Old Caleb pays for his sleepiness and carelessness with the guilt of letting his city be flooded, not once but twice; the Queen of Shadowlands pays for absolute power with the lives of her husband and son; the would-be spy Alan pays for his infidelity with the loss of his love; and the royal lovers Veronica and Roland pay for betraying their promises to each other

with their lives. Pretty stories aren't always easy ones, but classics like this are enduring.

HELEN MCCARTHY

BAREFOOT GEN

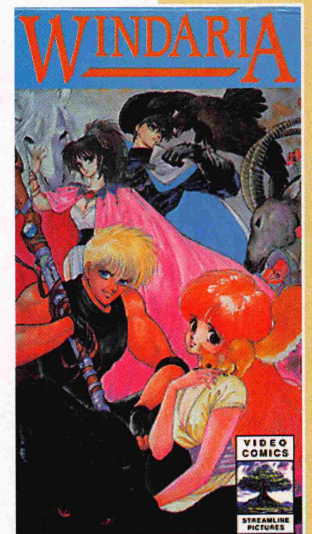
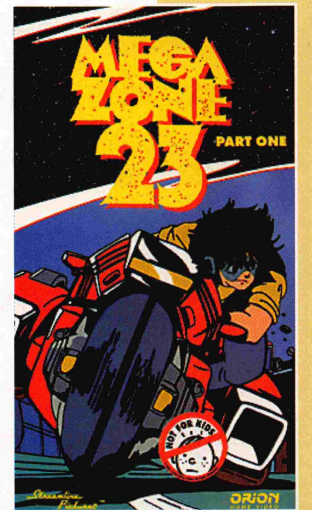
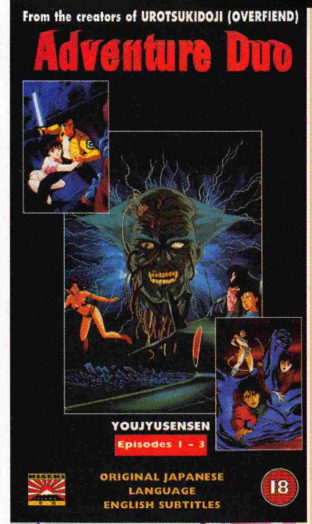
Orion Home Video, Streamline Pictures, 91423-TS, not rated, 80 minutes approx, English dubbed with English language closed captions.

Our Western attitude to cartoons is that they are for kids; they should be lighthearted, funny, allowing for some black humour and exaggerated signals but ultimately non-threatening. We expect serious material to be treated seriously. BAREFOOT GEN is a shock to the system; its bright, sunny opening, showing a happy family working hard to overcome difficult circumstances, and presented in a typically light, cheerful cartoon style, leads us directly into a horror story far worse than any UROTSUKIDOJI fantasy, because it really happened. Then again, Hiroshima was like that on 6th August 1945; a normal, bright day suddenly went dark and everyday life was submerged in the script of a horror flick with sfx courtesy of the cargo of the Enola Gay. There is no holding back on the terrible effects of the bomb; the huge tragedy is reduced to a series of easily grasped but hardly comprehended personal events, and through the eyes of Gen, his family and the survivors he meets we learn what surviving a nuclear blast means. Yet this is a profoundly optimistic film; it is not concerned with blaming anyone for what occurred, only with showing us why we shouldn't let it happen again. As a survivor's own account of the events, although fictionalised, it has enormous historical value and should be shown in every school and youth group as part of a programme of discussion on this year's anniversary and the nuclear problem; as a piece of film-making it is adventurous; as a release in the 50th anniversary year of the events it chronicles it is brave and timely; as a tribute to the medium's ability to treat a serious matter as it deserves it's exemplary. *Of course you should buy a copy.*

HELEN MCCARTHY



NE-CHAN'S FAVOURITE THIS MONTH IS TENCHI MUYO- THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CARNIVAL!



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**BOOK
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WAR STORIES

Jonathan Clements reviews the current
crop of Hiroshima cash-ins

Life can throw some funny things in your direction, can't it? One day you're a worthy soul turning out fiction which no-one really reads. Then the next moment, BANG! Somebody in Sweden says they like your stuff and suddenly you're a personality. In 1994 it happened to Kenzaburo Oe, and the tide of Oemania has been breaking ever since. This isn't of much concern to yours truly, who doesn't have much time for Mr Oe's literary fiction. And I doubt Oe will lose any sleep over me either.

One of the most interesting bits of Oemobilia around at the moment is a little book from Kodansha called *Japan, the Ambiguous and Myself*. This beautifully-designed package contains transcripts of several speeches, including Oe's Nobel acceptance, and it provides plenty of insight into

Oe the Writer. He comes across as a bit of a fossil, concerned that the youth of today are too busy reading trash to partake of great literature. It reads very much like a 'kids-today-don't-know-they're-born' rant, but contains interesting comments on the death rattle of the literary school that produced Oe and his ilk. Oe has genuine political concerns about the apathy of modern intellectuals, and it is difficult to argue with him. He is worried about the current preference for 'entertainment' before 'education', and the gradual demise of the literary magazines that gave birth to his style of authorship. Modern intellectuals, he moans, spend all their time reading Haruki Murakami and Banana Yoshimoto. Why oh why can't they read proper writers like Yuko Tsushima? Maybe it's because readers today have better things to do than watch literary paint dry.

Then again, at least Oe stands by his guns. Back in the 60s he was on the far-right hit list after daring to write a tale about a Japanese revolution. He's never really agreed with the Imperial system, a fact which people tended to forget during his later novels about rearing a handicapped child, but which recently came to the fore again. Upon winning the Nobel Prize, he reminded the Japanese of his political conviction by turning down an Imperial citation; now *that* takes guts.

Hiroshima Notes is a veritable megaton of guts on Oe's part, since it is unlikely to be received too well at the moment. It was written in the 1960s, but has been rushed out with a 1995 introduction tacked on in an attempt to gloss over some of the more obvious loopholes. *Hiroshima Notes* is, on the surface, a plea against war, issued in the name of its innocent victims. Some of Japan's worst war criminals got away with seven years in jail, whereas those civilians who happened to be in a certain

place at a certain time have received life sentences of illness and mutation. Most tragically, there are those who were not even born in 1945, who are forced to carry their parents' folly in their genes. Then again, there are many Allied veterans alive today who would have been killed if Japan had been taken by conventional means. Should they have died to spare the inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Would you be reading this today if Grandfather had been killed at the Siege of Yokohama? This is a question rarely asked in the politically-correct circles, and it is not one that Oe wants to consider. Oe is Japanese, writing originally for a Japanese audience, and as such he smacks straight into the cultural wall that is known euphemistically as the 'textbook problem'. Others have found less polite ways to describe it, and as VJ-day approaches, it will doubtless receive wider coverage in the western media.

According to Japanese schoolbooks, Manchuria wasn't 'invaded'. Instead, the Japanese forces 'progressed' into it, rather as one might 'progress' into the drawing room. Similarly, what we call the 'rape of Nanking' is dismissed as 'a few deaths' upon the capture of that city. In its own way, *Hiroshima Notes* suffers from the same problem. It is likely that Oe had no choice, since the 'textbook problem' is a difficult wall to breach without running into trouble with the censor. So, Hiroshima begins for Oe in August 1945. His narrative of death and anguish begins with the appearance of the bomber in the sky, as if it were conjured out of thin air. It could be argued that the war is not Oe's concern, rather that he aims to display the horrors of a nuclear holocaust, and the terrible damage that such powers can do to generations unborn. Hiroshima was a powerful, revelatory influence on Oe's life; when his life was at its lowest ebb, a chance visit to Hiroshima inspired him to pull him-

self together and count his blessings. For this reason, he writes a very moving testimony of the survivors' story, but one which will leave a lot of western readers cold.

Hiroshima did not begin in August 1945 for those who live outside Japan. Some would say it began in 1941, with Pearl Harbour. Even more might argue that Hiroshima began in 1937, in Manchuria. Oe makes no mention of these incidents; indeed, his thoughts on the Allied plan of action are rather patronising. He suggests the Allied powers decided to use the bomb on Japan because the Japanese were thought to be strong enough to survive it. This is rubbish. Even under the harshest analysis of realpolitik, the Allies dropped the bomb because it would save Allied lives. Without the bomb, the devastation of Okinawa and Iwo Jima might have flashed across the whole of Japan, killing even more on both sides. Oe secretly knows this, or if he doesn't he ignores his own evidence in *Hiroshima Notes*. In one chapter, he attempts a moving tale and puts his PC foot right in it. As the bomb went off, a man was blinded in one eye as he sat writing in his diary. But he was writing of his day's labour, the sharpening of 300 bamboo spears. I doubt very much whether the Allied soldiers he was hoping to impale, or indeed their families, would regard the plight of such a man with any sympathy. Oe, however, expects us to shake our heads and join with him as he calls for no more Hiroshimas. Are far as the Japanese are concerned, that's very easy. They just have to make sure there are no more Nankings.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the fence, we have *Codename Downfall: The Secret Plan to Invade Japan*. It's always a bit suspicious when a book by two Americans receives its first publication in the UK, but then again, for all we know the States have already had their quota of WW2 studies this year. Released scant weeks before the fiftieth anniversary of VJ-Day, *Codename Downfall* is a pre-emptive strike against much of the anti-Hiroshima campaigners. Or at least, that's what it would like to be. Actually it's just another book about the war in the Pacific, albeit a rather good one. The controversial packaging has been calculated to hit the consumer where it hurts, right in the zeitgeist.

The blurb on the book is slightly misleading, since it doesn't really say anything new about the planned invasion of Japan. This is, of course, because it never took place, and there is only so much mileage you can get out of a 'first we'll do this, then maybe we'll follow with that' hypothesis. Instead, authors Allen and Polmar concentrate on blow-by-blow account of the campaign, which they use to illustrate the attitude of the Allied forces towards their enemies. This in itself is fascinating and rich in detail. One of the authors' tangents reveals that news of many Japanese war crimes was suppressed until after the war, in order to keep American soldiers from escalating tit-for-tat atrocities. Another section provides an alarming account of the Allied attitude towards chemical and bacteriological warfare, debunking the myth of the Allies as whiter-than-white adherents to the Geneva accords.

While much of the anecdotal tangents are interesting, a couple of rather important ones have been missed out. On the first page, the authors run through the events of Pearl Harbour, and add that, a considerable while later "...US Army aircraft in the Philippines were virtually wiped out by another surprise attack." How many 'surprises' did the Allied forces need before they realised the Japanese at war? *Codename Downfall* admits that Japan had been viewed as a potential enemy for over thirty years, but does not delve into suspicions that Pearl Harbour was allowed to happen by

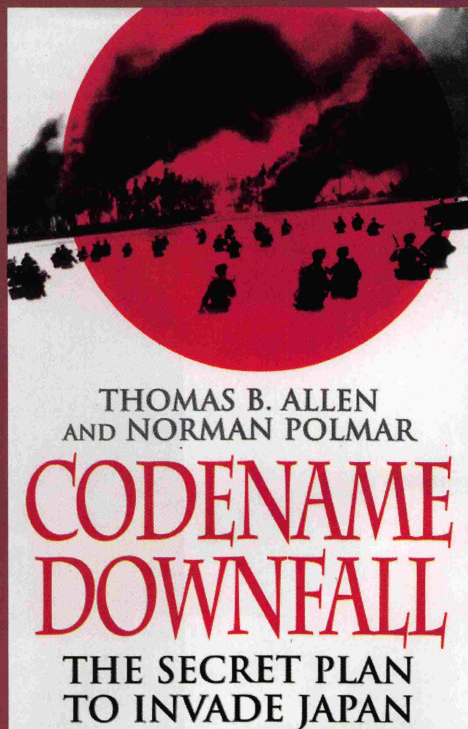
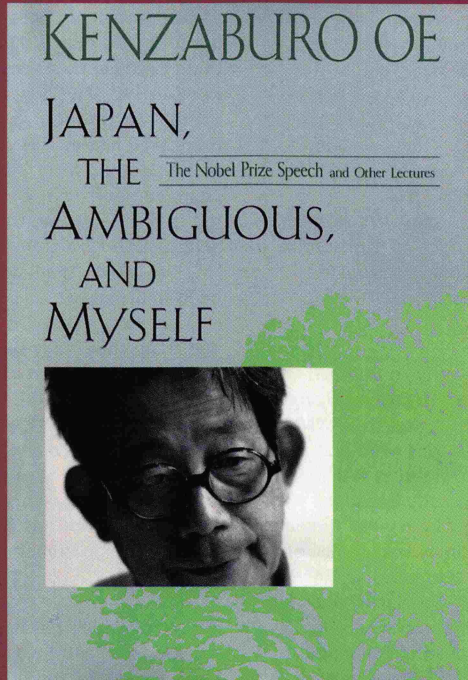
Allied power-mongers. In chapter 2, the authors relate Nimitz's use of code-breakers in the defence of Port Moresby, but do not think to ask why these handy chaps weren't put to good use a month earlier, saving American lives in Hawaii.

It is an excellent popular account of the later Pacific Campaign, and while it does include a single chapter on Operation Downfall, it remains critical of the 'virtual' statistics supplied by military

commanders. MacArthur predicts heavy losses, then backtracks when he realises he might be denied the chance to invade the Japanese mainland. Obviously there would have been substantial losses on both sides, but merely knowing where those losses might be suffered adds little to the argument for dropping the Bomb.

The argument, then as now, remains founded upon extrapolations of losses in Okinawa, where the Allied forces suffered 39,000 casualties, applied to a similar assault on Japan proper. The authors add anecdotal evidence on the Japanese will to resist, which is hardly earth-shattering. Much of it is along the lines of quotes from interrogations with random Japanese officers: 'Would you have used the atom bomb on us if you had it?' 'Sure,' comes the reply from a nameless officer. Even though in my case they are preaching to the converted, Allen and Polmar's thesis does not provide conclusive proof of the need for Hiroshima. They merely reiterate that the rationale for Hiroshima and Nagasaki remains subjective and time-sensitive. Furthermore, the book remains very much a defence of the decision to use the Bombs, and seems to gloss over the major arguments against it. There is, for example, little coverage of the after-effects of radiation poisoning, which were known at the time but suppressed until the mid-50s. Treatment of the allegation that Hiroshima was really the first shot of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, is also conspicuous in its absence. The only real objection that the book raises is the use of strategic weapons against civilian targets, and this is easily dismissed in the light of Shanghai, London and Dresden, all of which had already broken the 1918 treaty on air war.

Allen and Polmar do provide much evidence of the American state of mind at the time, and are very good on the gradual discovery of Japanese fanaticism and war crimes. This includes an account of the American experience of previous Japanese 'surrenders', many of which were traps, which shows why there was a perceived need for Japan's total subjugation. However, although the authors have made use of Japanese sources, the references and bibliography remain heavily weighted towards the English-language. They are hindered in their quest by the 'textbook problem' in Japan, which still makes research difficult, and probably by the natural reluctance of their Japanese interviewees to discuss their attitude towards suicidal resistance at the time of the surrender. Tucked away on the final page of the bibliography is Dean Vander Linde's unpublished MA thesis on Operation Downfall, and although it is hardly mentioned in the references, I imagine that this has been a major source for the book's central chapter. The rest of it has been cobbled together from older sources, with, admittedly some new data from previously-classified American documents. But to their credit, the authors have provided comprehensive references, and a refreshingly humble acknowledgement to those researchers who paved the way for them. Despite its rather contrived pedigree, *Codename Downfall* remains one of the most readable and informative accounts of the war in the Pacific. Unlike the many dry textbooks which it plunders, it is highly accessible to the lay reader, and gripping to the extent that this reviewer read it in one eight-hour sitting. The dust-jacket promises proof that '...the bomb had to be dropped...', but this is mere hype to put the book ahead of the many other 1945 cash-ins on that are currently hitting reviewers' doormats. What the blurb ought to promise is a page-turning tale of the fall of Japan, which goes some way towards demonstrating the reasoning which led to the fateful trip of the Enola Gay. May I suggest that someone send a copy to Mr Oe? He would find it to be an illuminating read.



Japan, The Ambiguous and Myself.
Kenzaburo Oe.
Kodansha International, 1995.
ISBN 4-7700-1980-7.

Hiroshima Notes. Kenzaburo Oe.
Marion Boyars Ltd, 1995.
ISBN (not yet known).

CODENAME DOWNFALL: The Secret Plan to Invade Japan. Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar. Headline, 1995.
ISBN: 0-7472-1552-9.



Dear Helen,
 Congratulations on your new ANIME FX magazine, it is a great improvement on the already brilliant ANIME UK. I have just bought ANIME FX issue 5, and after reading ANIMAIL section I was especially interested by Phil Halliwell's comments on Manga Video abolishing their ideas to release the RANMA 1/2 videos and the type of videos they are releasing. I agree with Phil. RANMA 1/2 is one of the most popular and successful anime to date. Even people who know very little about anime will certainly know about RANMA 1/2. You explained about the problems of releasing long series and the commitment involved, but what about AnimEigo's/Anime Projects' commitment to release all 196 episodes of the famous URUSEI YATSURA, and on top of that the release of the five movies? This roughly totals 5400 minutes of astounding entertainment, or over 80 hours. You said that it would cost a lot to release RANMA 1/2, but I'm sure that the immense popularity of the title would more than profit MV. I agree with Phil Halliwell that MV are not giving their fans what they are asking for. Also, why is it that Manga Entertainment US release videos in both subtitled and dubbed format, while M.E. UK only release dubbed videos? Another thing is that MV seem to be stuck on one genre lately, SF. They haven't released many martial arts videos or many comedy titles or even horror. I am not trying to say that MV are the worst company releasing videos; they are in fact the best, and if it wasn't for MV anime would not even have entered in Britain. They have released brilliant anime with brilliant dubs such as FIST OF THE NORTH STAR, UROTSUKIDOJI and MACROSS PLUS. I am saying that they should release videos that people want and not videos that people haven't heard of. Finally, MV released a couple of video in widescreen. Is it possible that they will release more videos in this format? And is it possible that you will do a thorough review of URUSEI YATSURA like you did on DRAGONBALL /DBZ? Thank you!
AMARDEEP BAINS,
 Hounslow, Middx, England.

HELEN : *MV must be releasing videos that some people want - or they wouldn't sell any tapes. Maybe they aren't releasing all the ones you or Phil or other fans want, but even a very rich and successful company can't do everything. And as for "videos that people haven't heard of", the amount of anime released in Japan is so huge that most people haven't heard of more than 10% of it; yet much of the stuff that doesn't get hyped on the fan circuit is worth seeing. But all you Ranmaniacs out there can be sure of one thing - if you convince the*

ANIMAIL is YOUR forum for your views, questions or comments on the anime and manga scene. Send your letters to ANIMAIL, AUK, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF, UK. If you'd like a personal reply please enclose a self-addressed envelope with UK postage, or two International Reply Coupons for overseas postage. Please note that our Post Office will not accept foreign stamps for postage of replies from the UK.

British video industry that RANMA 1/2 will make money, it will eventually get a UK release. As for widescreen releases, neither MV nor anyone else can release a title on widescreen unless it's actually been made that way. TV series and OAV series aren't. And yes, we are considering a big UY overview - but something as detailed as our DBZ feature takes a lot of translating, writing, and planning, so it may take us a while!

Dear Helen,
 I'm writing in reply to Phil Halliwell's letter regarding Manga Video and their rights to RANMA 1/2. Like Phil, I was tired and angry at MV for not releasing RANMA in this country; mostly because I was tired of trying to decipher the subtitled of increasingly bad copies of fan subs, but also because RANMA really turned me towards what I think is the softer, better side of anime as opposed to MV's and Kiseki's OVERFIEND series et al. So, I decided to write a letter to MV, pointing out all the plus points (etc) about releasing RANMA in this country.

I got a reply from David Jerrom three months after I sent off the letter, which was nice because I wasn't really expecting one! But, the thing that really took me by surprise was that David stated that MV DID NOT pick up the license; a computer game company did.

My guess is that this computer game company is Ocean, but don't quote me on that. I think it may be them because they released the RANMA 1/2 SNES video game in the UK (but with American voices and French TV names - WHY?!? But that's another story, I guess!) I have heard rumours that Ocean have the rights to release the third RANMA SNES game ("Hard Battle") in the UK, but I don't think anything has been finalised yet.

The thing that really bugs me is why hasn't anything been said by MV after the report in the Newsline section of (old) AUK #13? Is it up to fans like myself to ask for info, spread it all around only to be faced with accusations of being a gossip with no concrete proof? Why hasn't whoever it is bought the rights said anything?

The whole thing has been bugging me for ages, and I was wondering if anyone else out there knew of anything similar to what David told me? [Sigh!] It's tough being a RANMA fan in the UK! Right now I'm off to draw, maybe it will ease the pain after reading in the last Xmas issue of *Animerica* that the RANMA manga serialisation is coming to a stop in Japan soon... hidoi, ne? (trans : horrible, eh?)

LAURA 'C-KO' WATTON,
 Halesown, West Midlands, England.



Ranma 1/2: The mystery deepens

HELEN : *Thanks for throwing some light on the story, Laura. Unfortunately that quote from Laurence Guinness' AUKcon platform appearance in AUK #13 was the last time we got any information from MEL. However we telephoned Ocean Software (on 21st August 95) and they say they haven't acquired the RANMA video rights. So the mystery deepens! Anyone out there got any more information/rumour/wild gossip?*

Dear ANIME FX,
 Konnichiwa! I have just read Vol 1 #4 (New Series) where you talk about PATLABOR the anime and manga series and say that there are no Western companies that are trying to show the PATLABOR TV series. (They're not intelligent enough?)

Guess what? Here in the Philippines one TV station has just recently launched the PATLABOR TV series! (It just started, on August 3 1995.) But the only difference is ... that it is a Filipino version! The language used is Filipino. Some of the characters names are changed (like, from Noa Izumi to Nova Santiago). Well, even though it is in Filipino, I can give it a thumbs-up! And be proud of being able to watch the PATLABOR TV series (for the first time in all Asian countries, except Japan).

So, those PATLABOR series fans, start studying and read and speak Filipino if you want to watch the TV series here in the Philippines. Thank you very much! And more power!
JOHN JOSEPH GUCE,
 Pasig City, Philippines.

HELEN : *So come on, NBC and BBC2, what do we have to do to get this fabulous, funny, well-scripted, action-packed, characterful series on Western TV screens? Beg? Take over the building with armed guerrillas? Get an anime fan appointed as Director General? Just tell us ...*

Dear ANIME FX,
 Well done! I must congratulate you on the production of an excellent magazine. I was especially happy when ANIME UK #4 caught my eye in a local supermarket! Words could not describe my expression while waiting to pay at the check-out! I have a question for you : judging from my address, could you tell me the location of a good nearby comic shop? It's just that my local emporium recently closed down and I don't like the look of mail order. See you later,
STEPHEN J. CROSS, Trimdon Grange, Co. Durham, UK

HELEN : *Sorry, but I never recommend shops I haven't tried personally, and having lived in London for the last 20 years my acquaintance with the comic shops of County*

Durham can only be described as non-existent. Have a look in COMICS INTERNATIONAL, which lists comic shops all over the country. Maybe other readers who know of good shops could write in and let us know about them? But don't write off the idea of mail order - some shops are very good and offer an excellent, reliable service. I can personally recommend a few - Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield S6 8HS, Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 71 New Oxford St., London WC1, and Anime Projects, 19 High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 1NP, help customers all over Europe; and Nikaku Animart at 615 N 6th St., San Jose, CA, USA, offers the best mail order service I've ever encountered and has been used by many, many European fans with good results.

Dear Helen,

I plan to start a new German language fanzine. Do you have any suggestions whom I should contact to get information from Japan? (I know. The best way is to read ANIME FX every month. What more information could I want?) Also can you tell me where I can get copies of the IRONFIST CHINMI manga you told your readers about in issue 4?

Keep up the good work!!

MICHAEL HIRTZY,
Eggersdorf, Austria.

HELEN : *Far and away the best way to get up-to-the-minute Japanese information is, of course, to read the Japanese magazines like NEWTYPE, ANIMAGE and ANIME V. But if you don't read Japanese, it can be a problem unless you can find a Japanese friend to help you. Your local college or university might be able to help you find a linguist who would work with you, or use our columns to find a Japanese-speaking penpal. The Internet is also a good source of anime information, though you have to dig through a lot of opinion and debate to find the facts! Check out rec.arts.anime and the various anime bulletin boards (the Miyazaki bbs comes highly recommended). As for IRONFIST CHINMI, I don't know if the publishers have made an arrangement for distribution in Europe, but you can write to them and find out. They are Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2 Soho Square, London W1V 6HB, UK.*

Dear ANIME FX,

I am an avid reader of your most excellent magazine and was happy to find the Top 10 Japanese comic survey printed recently. Could you please tell me where I could get either a first edition, and the rest of the series, or any first volume books of any of the Top Ten - eg URUSEI YATSURA Vol 1 or issue 1? THE MYSTERIOUS CITIES OF GOLD and ULYSSES 31 were my first

experiences of anime, not to mention two of the best series I've ever seen. I was just wondering if either series was available to buy on video, and if so, when, where, which, what, how??

I think I'm in love with Lum! Is this a common problem?

JONATHAN EDWARDS,
Birmingham, W. Midlands, UK

HELEN : *If I knew where you could get a first edition of BLACK JACK, ROSE OF VERSALLES or GLASS MASK, I'd be there myself! All those comics are classics and first editions are scarce and expensive. However many classic manga get reprinted, so your best bet is to go to a Japanese bookshop and ask the staff if they have reprints of the titles and authors you want. You could try BOOKS NIPPON, 64-66 St. Paul's Churchyard, London EC4, or BOOKS ASAHIIYA, Yaohang Plaza, 399 Edgware Road, Colindale, London NW9. For translated manga, you could contact the shops I recommended to Stephen Cross in my reply to his letter, above. 12 episodes of ULYSSES 31 were available on the RCA Columbia Pictures International video a couple of years back. You might still pick up a tape in a video shop, Woolworths or Smiths - ask in your local shops if they still have a copy. As for being in love with Lum, it's only a problem for about 50% of Western male anime fans. The other 50% quite enjoy the sensation.*

Dear Helen,

This is a desperate plea from a desperate Guernseyman. I have to get in touch with Laura Taylor (ANIMAIL, issue 4). Like her I am a fanatical GUYVER fan, and until reading her letter I thought I was the only one like me in the world. So, Laura, if you are reading this, please please get in touch with me so we can talk about THE GUYVER. Yours Bio-Boosting,
JAMES ANGELL, Miromar, Les Effards, St. Sampsons, Guernsey, C.I., GY2 4YW.
(full address printed at his request)

HELEN : *THE GUYVER is one of the best-selling anime videos in the UK, so you can't be alone, James! I hope Laura gets in touch with you, and I'm sure other GUYVER fans will do the same. Maybe you could start up your own GUYVER fanzine - there are certainly plenty of GUYVER fans out there!*

Dear Helen,

I am responding to Harley Sagar's letter (issue 4, new series). How can anybody be so naive! It shocks me to find such a closed-minded point of view coming from an anime/manga fan. I've been into anime and manga for over a year-and-a-half, and if it wasn't for magazines such as AFX and Manga



Mania I wouldn't have known where to start (and I thank you for helping me to do so). When referring to "people who like THE GUYVER and stuff", does Harley mean that THE GUYVER is not "real" anime, and that fans of it are not "real" anime/manga fans? Then what is "real" anime/manga and what constitutes a "real" anime/manga fan. Also, on the point about people being introduced to anime by your magazine, why not? Even the Japanese have to be introduced in one way or another! I hope I haven't gone too far over the top with this letter, but I am really enraged by people who want everybody to conform to their elitist ideals when it comes to their interests.

Mata ne,
BRIAN TODD,
Monteith, Dundee, Scotland

HELEN : *Far from going too far over the top, Brian, yours was the mildest of several letters responding to Harley's comments. It's amazing how many people are willing to propose murder in the name of tolerance ... But as for THE GUYVER, it was made in Japan by the Japanese, so it is, definitely, "real" anime. And a "real" anime/manga fan is anyone who likes Japanese animation and comics. That's my view, anyway.*

Dear Helen,

American cyberpunk and Japanese SF have always been radically different beasts, since Gibson et al. were largely elaborating an American perspective on Japan's burgeoning industrial and technological pre-eminence, in stark contrast with America's precipitate economic and social decline. Must anime cyberpunk remain an oxymoron, then? The enduring recession, ubiquitous political corruption and genocidal antics of various millenarian fudge-heads would appear to make Nineties' Japan an environment

entirely conducive to the production of cyberpunk science fictions. Wait and see, I say.

Love the giant monster stuff. I've heard a rumour that the next prospective ALIENS movie has the wee beasties being brought down to Earth to an Alienworld theme park somewhere in Tokyo. They don't stay captive for long, of course. Giger's Alien in GODZILLA country; makes the mouth water, doesn't it?

Sega Saturn and Sony Playstation, but wherefore anime on CD? I think we should be told.
Keep turning heads,
VESPALUUS, Walsall, W. Midlands, UK.

HELEN : *We'll do our best...*

Dear ANIME FX,

I have a big problem. I love DRAGONBALL, I have cards, posters and books but they are all in Cantonese or Japanese. I need a few videos, preferably in English or subtitled, at any price, and so long as it is legal to have them. I am VERY desperate, PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE can you tell me where I can get them? also will the books ever come out in English? PLEASE HELP!
BARRY HAYCOCK,
Aldershot, UK

HELEN : *At present it is impossible to buy a video of the DRAGONBALL TV series or movies legally in the UK because no-one is licensed to sell such videos in the UK, and the BBFC have not certificated the title for UK distribution. Any videos offered for sale with English dubbing or subtitles are bootlegs UNLESS you can find that rare Malaysian tape mentioned a couple of issues back at a car boot sale, which is about as likely as Bulma turning up on your doorstep for a date. The only exception are tapes dubbed in Hong Kong*

for the Chinese community, which are legally required to have English subtitles; but even there, the legal status of their distribution in the UK is, let's say, undefined. However the US dub/edit of the DRAGONBALL TV series may get to UK TV and answer one of your pleas. As for the manga, as we go to press no firm deal has been announced for its English language release but a number of British and American companies are known to be interested. Sorry, that's the best I can do for you right now!

Dear Helen,

I've been meaning to write to you for some time now regarding a few issues. I'm not the one to bash on subtitled release material as I myself prefer subs to dubs as I love to listen to Japanese voices, which helps me to learn and understand Japanese better and in turn helps my pronunciation of Japanese words. But the recent releases by Western Connection could have been a lot better, for example the timing was off the majority of the time and at first I was wondering if it was me or the video as I ended up rewinding sections of the tape all the time (very annoying). As to Kiseki's videos, I personally would have preferred open caption subtitles with a clearer use of colours for different situations, eg AnimEigo, who have the best commercial release subtitles yet (keep up the good work!), TOP O NERAE GUN-BUSTER, and the MACROSS PLUS Subtitled version released only in America (not fair, I had to import mine via a friend). Why don't Manga Video do the same in the UK as well? This is a mystery which we might never know, or so obvious it isn't worth answering - money grabbers, spit, boo.

Close caption subs just get in the way of the animation, eg PLASTIC LITTLE and MACROSS DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE, as these both have some amazing animation sequences. But back to Western Connection subs before I get even more sidetracked on the pros and cons of Manga Videoerrrr..... (They released some good dubs recently; even I was impressed with MACROSS PLUS, but this was dubbed by the Americans ex-LA Hero; a bit of food for thought, eh?)

It doesn't take that much more time or staff to subtitle something (well, OK, it does take a lot of time) but Western Connection could at least have checked it a few more times regarding the timing, as they only have to sit down and watch it again and make any final corrections. To be honest, it started to look like a bad fan sub at the end of IDOL DEFENCE BAND HUMMINGBIRD. In fact, I think that the fans could do a

better subtitled version than they did. I hope that Western Connection improve, in which case I'll continue to support them.

For those who don't already know, Fanzine Animovement is running a petition to get KIMAGURE ORANGE ROAD TV episodes released from AnimEigo. Robert Woodhead of AnimEigo said that they would require a thousand buyers in order to go to the expense of releasing it. Animovement hopes to get 1000 signatures on its petition by the end of the year, with the help of clubs, doing surveys at conventions, and of their members. For more information contact Randy Navarro, 8520 Sturbridge Circle West, Jacksonville, FL 32244-5797, USA; or write to Kei Seabrook, 16 Coromandel, Abingdon, Oxford, OX14 5QG, UK, and he will pass petitions on to Randy. (Please enclose ssaes or IRCs if you want a reply.)

C-Ya,
BILLY MAN,
Abingdon, Oxford, England.

HELEN : *I hope you've passed all these comments on to the companies concerned - if they don't know what you think, how can they be influenced by it? You can't rely on EVERYONE reading ANIME FX, you know! As for the KOR petition, I wish Randy luck, but I can't help thinking that AnimEigo would find 1000 firm orders for the whole series, with cheques for the first three tapes attached, a lot more reassuring than a petition.*

Dear Helen,
I'm a 17 year old student from England and I am sitting down writing this on VJ Day.. Whilst watching the news and after seeing the Japanese President humbly apologise for crimes that his country committed in World War II, I picked up a tabloid newspaper with a supplement about VJ Day inside, and I was so angry and disgusted at the comments. Some of the veterans were saying "Japs are vermin, I would never shake hands with one". But what worried me was when one of them said we didn't drop enough bombs. Well, maybe we dropped two too many. We may have saved 500,000 lives, but is it worth it to make a world live in fear for nearly 50 years of the nuclear nightmare?

Is it worth punishing generation after generation of a nation that has apologised? What more can they do to make the world recognise their sincerity? They are obviously deeply ashamed, and why should Japanese youth be burdened with the mistakes of another generation? The world forgave Germany - why not Japan? Why can't the world forgive and forget - that is, forget the guilt imposed upon Japan by an older generation, but not the lessons



We couldn't resist it! Here are a few more shots from the live action DRAGONBALL: THE MAGIC BEGINS as featured in last months 'LIVE N' KICKING (Released in the UK by Columbia-Tristar who supplied the pics. Thanks to Tony Clark!)

learned by the horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I hope this letter is not too controversial to print. Please print it as I feel it is an important issue, and one that I feel strongly about. If you do print this, could you please print my address in case anyone wants to write to me.

LEE McNAMARA,
89 Green Street, March, Cambs.,
PE15 9DZ, England.

HELEN : *I'm sure we all sympathise with the feelings of the veterans who suffered during World War II, and with all those who lost loved ones; but after fifty years, it's time to move forward. Let's hope that in another half century we can look back on a world truly at peace, and that the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never be repeated.*



15-year-old **LISA MUNNS** of Launceston, Cornwall, England, read Helen's SOAPBOX piece about attracting female into anime fandom and gives us her own views

It was with great interest that I read Helen's SOAPBOX piece in AUK #4 on female fandom. I am one of that rare species, a female fan, and I have two ideas on how to save our species from extinction.

Firstly, and most blatantly obvious, more shojo anime and manga needs to be released over here. Companies have tried to cater for girls with the likes of TENCHI MUYO! and URUSEI YATSURA, but this doesn't really cut the mustard. That isn't to say I don't love these titles - they are two of my alltime favourites - but they aren't "girly" enough. Something like ORANGE ROAD, MARMALADE BOY or SAILOR MOON would really go down a treat over here. Not only would it make many a devoted otaku very happy, but it would get more females into anime.

You might think "What's wrong with URUSEI YATSURA? It's got romance and humour, why don't girls like that?" I can tell you exactly why. I go to an all-girls school, and a while back I took some anime nick-naks in to show my classmates. Among

them were some pictures of Lum and the general feeling among my friends was that Lum was a tart.



Girls feel threatened by these beautiful women with their perfect figures and gorgeous boyfriends because they're jealous of their, well ... perfection. Whereas heroines such as Sailor Moon or Miki from MARMALADE BOY are much easier to relate to. Okay, so they're pretty too, but what they go through is what real teenage girls experience - boy troubles, schoolwork problems,

family disagreements ... these girls are genuine, and so females wouldn't feel threatened, because they can relate to them and what they're going through. More 'girls' anime and manga needs to be released if girls are expected to get into it.

Secondly, existing "softer" anime such as TENCHI MUYO! or OH MY GODDESS needs to be promoted in places girls would see. Flick through any teen magazine's poster section and you'll find a cute animal print - very often a kitten, puppy or bunny. If girls coo over a fluffy bunny in their JUST SEVENTEEN, why wouldn't they coo over Ryo-oh-ki-chan's pictures, used to promote TENCHI MUYO in their favourite teen read?

JUST SEVENTEEN encourages girls to be sassy, go-for-it, girls-with-attitude types, so why wouldn't its readers relate to BUBBLEGUM CRISIS? Females admire Thelma and Louise, so why not Priss and Nene? Telling females it's a video where four sussed chicks fight to save the world would intrigue so many teenage girls. They'd be singing "Konya wā Hurricane" in no time. "Softer" anime promoted in the right place could definitely boost the female otaku population.

Those girl-fans already out there - take note. Anime may be a male-dominated area right now, but don't



be afraid of what you are. So there aren't many female otaku out there; that just makes us more special. So don't just sit back, stand up and be counted. Female fandom is here to stay.

The UK's only

Doll MAGAZINE

Brought to you by the publishers of top selling magazines like Dolls House World, The Home Miniaturist and Teddy Bear Times - Doll Magazine is a quarterly, glossy, A4 title packed with wonderful colour pictures, covering everything from reproduction dolls to antique dolls, including artist dolls.

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Single issues: UK £3.75; Europe £5.25; Rest of World £6.50; US \$7.50; Canada \$9 (US funds only).

Subscription: UK £15; Europe £21; Rest of World £27; US \$30; Canada \$35 (US funds only).



Sun-Yi see her in the latest issue of Doll Magazine

FANZINE FILE

Latest issues
reviewed by our Editor

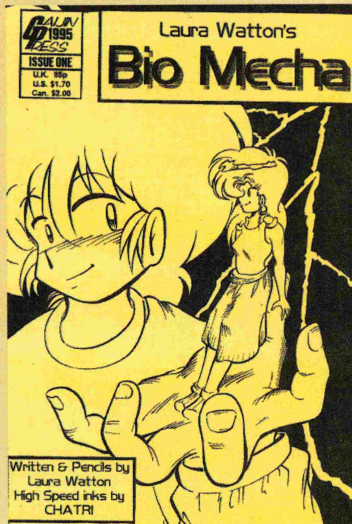
MANGAFFECT 5 is the last issue - as of #6 it'll change its name to ANIMURA which editor Andrew Salter translates as "The Anime Village". The zine has cut its video reviews to good effect. It's a pity that the remaining reviews mostly duplicate those in the current issue of ANIMENIA (and I do mean duplicate - Andrew reprints Josh's reviews and Josh reprints Andrew's). Two comics, the editor's own HIMITO REBEL and Josh Clark's SPIRIT GUARDIAN, plus a clutch of features on fan favourites like BUBBLEGUM CRISIS and an overview of GAIJIN PRESS add variety; again, though, one of the main features is a reprint from ANIMENIA. Room for improvement still, but a lot of effort is being made.

£1.00 plus 40p p & p from Andrew Salter, Bryony Lodge, College Road, East Halton, Grimsby, S. Humberside, DN40 3PJ, UK.



BIO-MECHA is another GAIJIN PRESS zine written and pencilled by Laura Watton and inked by Chatri. Fifteen-year-old Laura has improved immensely since her first efforts appeared on the fan scene, and while her draughtsmanship skills still have a way to go to hit pro standard and her figure drawing is weak, the charm and energy of her work has made her a popular fan artist. The story of a boy disabled in an accident and in dire need of help to control his cyber-arms has many popular elements both Eastern and Western in its first issue; to give just a few examples, he goes to a school for specially 'talented' kids with psychic or other unusual powers, a highschool romance seems to be in the offing, and he's charmingly clumsy. It's too early yet to say how BIO-MECHA will develop, but to judge by this first issue it has oodles of promise.

£1.00 from Gaijin Press, 2 Birkdale Drive, Immingham, Grimsby, DN40 2LB, UK.



ANIMENIA 5 is the first bimonthly, A4 format issue. Editor Josh Clark has worked hard on raising production standards, his stated admiration for MANGA MANIA shows in his cleaner, simpler layouts and picture choice. It's a pity that this issue and Andrew Salter's current MANGAFFECT have duplicated each other's reviews, and that each carries a somewhat incestuous piece in praise of the other's efforts, but otherwise ANIMENIA is a good buy at £1.25 from Gaijin Press. Send an ssae (or two IRCs) to the address above for more information on their other publications.

LUCY'S IN DEEP from FUTURE FACTORY was trailed in issue 5 of this magazine; the first issue arrived for review and impressed us not a little, and the second instalment is due soon. Keith McDowell is another fan artist whose work has improved considerably in the last eighteen months, and for his own imprint debut he's used the classic highschool manga format to focus on the problems affecting many kids in schools today. Drugs, bullies, romance, lack of style, being bad at games and terminal clumsiness are among the trials faced by his cast. The heroine is a rookie cop whose youthful looks - she's only three years out of school herself - get her an undercover assignment tracking a high school drugs ring. The 'manga with a message' element isn't pushed (in fact, you may miss it altogether unless you read the last page dedication) and the work has honesty, personality and good humour to recommend it.

£2.00 inc p & p (payable to FUTURE FACTORY, please) from FUTURE FACTORY, Keston, Low Road, Badingham, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 8NF, UK.

FANSCENE ROUNDUP

For the latest news on fan activities, clubs, zines and conventions, look here! And keep us posted on what fans in your area are doing!

Write to FANSCENE ROUNDUP, ANIME FX, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF.

CLUB NEWS

MARC ANTONIO, 547 E. Spruce Ave., Lemoore, CA 93245, USA, is starting up a club for fans interested in anime, manga and Japanese culture. If you'd like to join or can help, contact him right away.

TATTOO ART

MARC BRADY of 23a Kenton Park Road, Kenton, Harrow, Middx., HA3 8UB, UK, is a big anime fan and is trying to find a picture of ASTRO BOY so that he can have the Mighty Atom tattooed onto his arm. He will only use the picture for this purpose, not for any commercial use, and if anyone can locate a suitable pic, or any talented artist out there could draw him something suitable, he would be happy to pay a fee or expenses.



MIND BREAK



Test your anime and manga knowledge with our selection of brainteasers. The NEO-OTAKU level is based entirely on material released in the UK and USA, so you should be able to get by with out too many problems. As for the higher levels, well ... try them and see!

NEO-OTAKU

1. Which real-life Nazi heroine lent her name to the chara in KISHIN TROOPS?
2. Which Japanese artist is co-creating a comic for the US market with an American company?
3. Which British release has anew soundtrack by Europop group YELLO?
4. Name the school story which features a teacher genetically mutated from a cockroach.

OTAKU

1. In which year did Osamu Tezukasenei die?
2. Give the Japanese and American names for the famous white lion cub from JUNGLE TAITEI, and the American name for the series.
3. Name the company created by Mamoru Nagano to publish and handle rights in his works.
4. Which Japanese magazine deals specially with anime OAVs?

SUPER-OTAKU

1. Who is Fujiko Fujio?
2. Which US dub studio has patented the WORDFIT system for use in dubbing anime into English?
3. Which female wrestler voiced which Toshihiro Hirano heroine?
4. It forms part of the Australian post-apocalypse movie IN THE AFTERMATH - which anime is it? (Japanese title and translation please).

Here are the answers to last month's quiz - how many did YOU get.

NEO-OTAKU :

1. MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS. 2. 12, 3. Sylvia Stingray, Nene Romanova, Linna Yamazaki, Priscilla S. Asagiri, 4. VIZ video

OTAKU :

1. Kia Asamiya, 2. Akira Toriyama, 3. Justy Ueki Tyler, 4. Argo.

SUPER-OTAKU :

1. Nanase Ohkawa, Mokona Apapa, Satsuki Igarashi, Mikku Nekoi, 2. Anime-zine, 3. DIC co-producers of ULYSSES 31, US producers for SAILOR MOON, 4. SF SHINSEIKI LENS-MAN, released in the UK and USA as LENS-MAN.

MAY YIK, 13 Havelock Street London N1 0DA, UK ; '17 year old college student, budding writer/anime artist, huge Takahashi fan, also DRAGONBALL Z, most anime, shojo mänge; would like penpals of 16+, male or female.'

LOUISE O'DONNELL, 28 Skerry East Road, Newtown, Crammlin, Ballymena, Co. Antrim, BT43 6RP, Northern Ireland ; 'Hi! I'm looking for penpals from anywhere interested in anime and maga. I '14 and enjoy drawing, watching anime and maga. Faves include AKIRA and RANMA 1/2. Also like chart music and playing video games. Promise I'll reply to all letters!'

MICHAEL HIRTZY, Am Kornfeld 3, A-8063 Eggersdorf, AUSTRIA ; 'BIG anime and manga fan looking for penpals to exchange videos/information all over the world (esp. JAPAN and AMERICA). Fave anime USHIO & TORA, all LUPIN III movies, BGC and DOMINION, fave manga AKIRA, GUNSMITH CATS, OH! MY GODDESS, RANMA 1/2 and BONDAGE FAIRIES (I know! Quite perverted. But somehow I love it ...) Also want to find out if there are any female anime fans in this world, especially around Austria or Germany.'

GARETH HOWELLS, 196A Amblecote Road, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 2PP, UK ; 'I'm 16 years old, would like to correspond with anyone who loves manga & anime. I love GUYVER, TANK POLICE and DRAGONBALL Z. I will reply to all letters, so get writing! Fan art welcome.'

PHILIP BINDING, 47 Oakfields, Wallis Wood, Dorking, Surrey RH5 5RO, UK ; 'I'm 15 and love anime and manga. I'd like penpals from anywhere, but especially from Japan - girls that like anime and manga only. Fave anime DOMINION, TENCHI MUYO, MOLDDIVER, CATGIRL NUKUNUKU. Fave manga MAISON IKKOKU, LUM/URUSEI YATSURA. Fave music ragga, techno. Trying to

collect fan art so please send your artwork! Write soon!'

STEPHEN J. CROSS, 51 Rothbury Close, Trimdon Grange, Co. Durham, TS29 6PD, UK ; 'I'm 16, wish to receive letters from anime fans, preferably female, from outside the UK all over the world. I love MACROSS, DOMINION, and anime with a lighter/cute side, also like to discuss other topics especially music. I only speak English but an considering learning Japanese, Italian or Spanish. Please write to me - I will reply!'

FRASER MORTON, 10 Lisdarragh, Newry, Co. Down BT35 6AF, Northern Ireland ; 'I'm a 30some thing fan of Rumiko Takahashi looking for penfriends worldwide to exchange info, merchandise, etc. Reply guaranteed.'

JOHN MICHAEL LU, Rm 323 Goheco Bldg, GM Recto Ave, Santa Cruz, Manila, Philippines. 'I'm 17, seeking penpals from all over the world who love anime. My faves ; RANMA 1/2, ORANGE ROAD, LUM, CITY HUNTER and lots more, except OVERFIENDtype materials. I'd like English speaking penpals. I promise to answer and correspond to every letter. Sayonara!'

TIM MCCLARE, 30 The Crescent, Sassafras, Victoria 3787, Australia ; 'I'm a 19 year old graphic art student, I will be very excited to receive letters from 'otaku' all over the world (hopefully including some people from Japan). I love anime very deeply but don't like the XXXhorror genre. Greatest faves ; TOTORO (and all other Miyazaki work!), VIDEO GIRL AI, MARMALADE BOY, ORANGE ROAD, SAILOR MOON, PLASTIC LITTLE, RUPAN, TETSUWAN ATOM (Astroboy). I will reply to anyone and everyone who writes, instantly!'

LEAH MARKEY, 44 Babylon Road, Bellshill, Lanarkshire ML4 2LHO, UK ; 'Calling all males all round the world esp. USA/Australia. Good looking female, likes all kind of animation, music & motorbikes, all letters will be answered so please write.'

SHUVRA MAHMUD, 5 Telford Court, Alma Road, St. Albans, Herts AL1 3BP, UK ; 'I'm 14, looking for manga/anime penpals worldwide. Faves range from PROJECT A-KO through to DOOMED MEGALOPOLIS (oops!). Hobbies include draw-

ing, computers, watching/reading anime & manga. I'm only able to correspond in English but I want YOU to write to ME - wherever you are! I will reply to anyone & everyone, so I hope to hear from you.'

PAUL MARSHALL, 76 Pennine Drive, Milnrow, Rochdale, Lancs UL16 3HG, UK ; 'I'm 20, would like to correspond with anybody, preferably abroad, but all letters will be answered. Would like somebody who can send me stuff, because the more the merrier - let's discuss it. Faves include (no particular order) Warren, Sonoda, Takahashi, Maeda and Shirow.'

LILY CARPENETTI, Via San Benedetto 16, 34144 Trieste, Italy ; 'I'm a 21 years old Italian girl I love MARMALADE BOY, SAILOR MOON, DEAR BOYS and YU YU HAKUSHO. I'd love to find a lot of penpals from all the parts of the world! Please write me!'

PATTY FIGINI, Via Varese 12, 21047 Saronno (VA), Italy ; 'Hi everyone! I'm 20 years old, I'm an Italian girl and I love anime and manga, most of all LADY OSCAR, THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER, HOKUTO NO KEN and RANMA 1/2. I like drawing and reading, I study English, French, German and Japanese. I would like as many penfriends as possible, who like Japanese productions. Write me soon!'

DAVID TAYLOR, 56 Rosebery Ave, South Shore, Blackpool, Lancs FY4 1LB UK, and JOHN-PAUL CLANCY, 48 Saltcotes Place, Lythan-St Annes, Lancs FY8 3AP, UK ; 'We are two British biys who enjoy watching anime like AKIRA, JUDGE, PROJECT A-KO, and occasionally DEVILMAN. We also like heavy metal (Dog Eat Dog, Rage Against The Machine), and indie music (Supergrass, Blur). So anybody 14-16 (especially females as we haven't ever met any who like anime and manga) please write for long letters and loads of fun.'

PATRICK SACCO, 105 Arcade Street, Paola, PLA 03, Malta ; '26 years oldm English language instructor, university student and big Japanimaniac. Faves are GUNDAM, MACROSS, MOSPEADA, MAISON IKKOKU (crazy for Kyoko), HOKUTO NO KEN and TIGER MASK 2. I study Japanese and collect model kits. I'd like a male or female penpal worldwide, esp from TOKYO, and also info on ANIME SHOPS in JAPAL with overseas mail order service. I promise to answer ALL letters.'

PEN PALS

WIN PIONEER TAPES!

CONTEST CORNER



To celebrate the release of their three latest titles, **TENCHI MUYO - THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CARNIVAL** and **KISHIN HEIDAN** vols 3 & 4, we have **FIVE** copies of each tape to give away. That's fifteen tapes in total! How do you get one? Well, if you're one of our subscribers you don't have to do anything at all - because five subscriber numbers will be drawn at random and each wins a tape! That means, of course, that subscribers get two chances to win, because, like every other reader, they can enter the draw for the other ten tapes.

All you have to do is put your name and address on a postcard marked **TENCHI/KISHIN DRAW**, and sent it to us at **ANIME FX** before November 30th. The first ten out of the bag win a tape. Many thanks to Pioneer and Cathy Beck for their kindness.



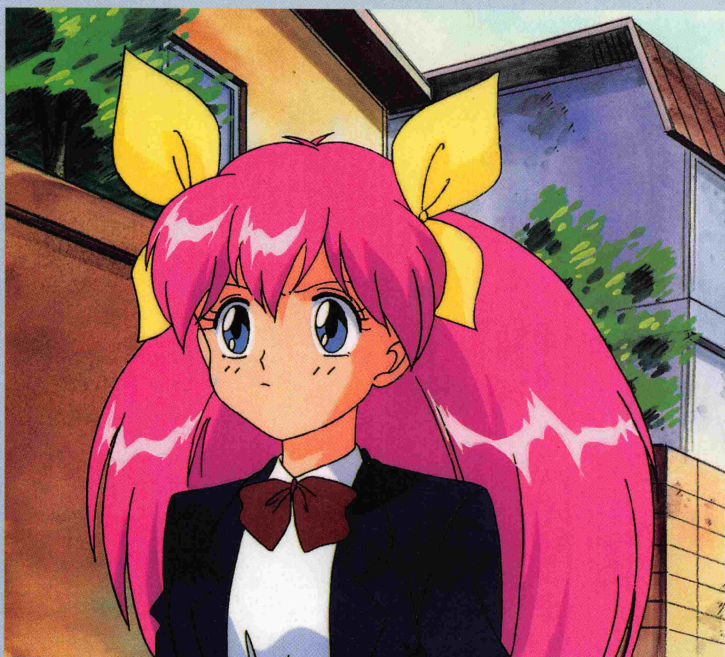
THIS ISSUE'S CONTEST IS PEACHY KEEN!

That's because our man in Japan, the revered kacho (Captain) of Team AFX Tokyo, yes, none other than Sakura Studio's very own **PETER EVANS**, has pulled off a stroke of genius. He's persuaded Mr. Fujii at

KSS to be very generous and give us **FIVE** cels from hit TV series **LOVE MESSENGER WEDDING PEACH**. You can see them illustrated here and you can win one for your very own! Of course, for such a very special prize, we had to make the contest a little bit harder than usual - but if you've been reading **ANIME FX** and watching anime carefully, you shouldn't find it too difficult! All you have to do is answer the following questions about other lovely anime ladies. First all correct card out of the bag wins the set-up on the left, next four get one of the cels above, each with its drawing.

- 1) **What is the real name of SAILOR MOON?**
- 2) **Who or what is Fatara?**
- 3) **Give the full names of the two policewoman who star in TAIHO SCHICHAUZO.**
- 4) **Who is the eldest of the Goddess sisters in AAA MEGAMISAMA?**
- 5) **Give the real name of the heroine of LOVE MESSENGER WEDDING PEACH.**

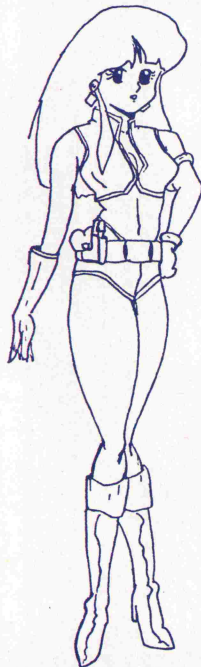
Put all five answers with your name and address on a postcard and send it to us to reach us before 30th October 1995, and you could soon be the lucky winner of a WEDDING PEACH cel!



NO HEIDAN IT ...

Our **KISHIN TROOPS** competition was a bit sneaky. We asked you in which decade the action of **KISHIN HEIDAN** begins. A lot of you said the 1940s, and you're right about the main story. **But** the first action onscreen, which starts off the story and is responsible for all the subsequent events, takes place in 1937. 13th August 1937, as some of you, like **C. HERBAUT** of London, noted.

All the correct answers went into Helen's bright pink **GALL FORCE** baseball cap, and the first card out was from **CAROL DOHERTY** of Darlington, Co. Durham, UK. She gets the cel. But the runners-up (**Matthew Murphy** of Middlesex, **Andrew Lai** of Glamorgan, **Damien Lyne** of Galway, Ireland, and of course **C. Herbaut**.) don't have to feel too bad - they not only got it right, they also get **KISHIN HEIDAN** videotapes. Thanks to the good people at **PIONEER** and **RTM** for the prizes and for bringing some great anime titles to the UK!



Top Left: "Hell World" by Lucy Farfort
 Top Right: Untitled by Nick Southam
 Far Left: Lum and B-KO by Iain McClumpha
 Left: Yuri by Daniel Field

GUIDELINES:

We accept colour and b/w artwork. Please do not exceed A4 size (297 x 210mm). Good quality photocopies are preferable to sending us the original. Pack to avoid creasing as this may show up when printed and DO NOT fold artwork! Get drawing!



eyecatch

あ おいしい!* **CREAMY MAMI'S LEMON MOUSSE** **Ah, oishii! (Ah, delicious!)*

INGREDIENTS:
 1 PACKET OF SUGAR-FREE LEMON JELLY JUICE AND RIND OF ONE LARGE LEMON
 LARGE TUB OF LOW FAT FROMAGE FRAIS
 1 EGG WHITE, STIFFLY BEATEN.

1 MAKE UP JELLY USING 3/4 PINT OF WATER INSTEAD OF 1 PINT

2 WHEN COOL STIR IN THE FROMAGE FRAIS, LEMON JUICE AND RIND

3 WHEN ALMOST SET FOLD IN THE STIFFLY BEATEN EGG WHITE

4 POUR INTO INDIVIDUAL DISHES, GLASSES OR ONE LARGE DISH. SERVES 4 TO 6!

NOT SUITABLE FOR CATS!



ANIME GALLERY

It's a Fujishima festival! After showcasing his police duo Natsumi & Miyuki, we couldn't resist bringing you these gorgeous pics of the Goddess Sisters and friends from AAA MEGAMISAMA, aka OH MY GODDESS, one of AnimEigo's and Anime Projects' most popular releases. Many thanks to AP's Nigel Fisher for the beautiful pictures. Here you can see Belldandy, alone and with Keiichi, while on the back cover are Urd, Belldandy and Skuld, with Keiichi & chums from Nekomi Tech.

AAA MEGAMISAMA/ OH MY GODDESS! © Kosuke Fujishima, Kodansha, TBS, KSS

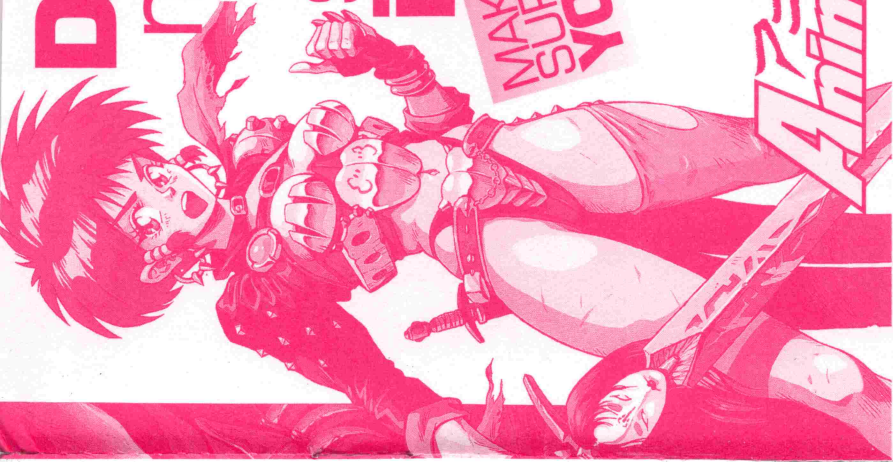


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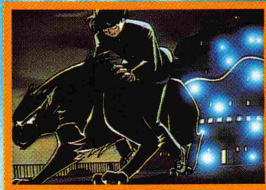
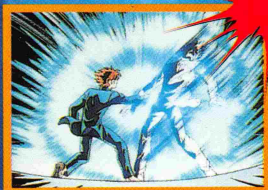
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